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TRAITS AND STORIES OF

THE IRISH PEASANTRY

IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOL. II

Carleton's House in Rathgar Avenue, Dublin.

TRAITS AND STORIES OF

THE IRISH PEASANTRY

BY

WILLIAM CARLETON

EDITED BY

D. J. O'DONOGHUE

LONDON

J. M. DENT AND CO.

NEW YORK: MACMILLAN AND CO. LTD.

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TRAITS AND STORIES OF

THE IRISH PEASANTRY

THE BATTLE OF THE FACTIONS [1]

(Composed into Narrative by a Hedge Schoolmaster)

MY grandfather, Connor O'Callaghan, though a tall, erect man, with white flowing hair, like snow, that falls profusely about his broad shoulders, is now in his eighty-third year; an amazing age, considhering his former habits. His countenance is still marked with honesty and traces of hard fighting, and his cheeks ruddy and cudgel-worn; his eyes, though not as black as they used to be, have lost very little of that nate fire which characterises the eyes of the O'Callaghans, and for which I myself have been—but my modesty won't allow me to allude to that—let it be sufficient for the present to say that there never was remembered so handsome a man in his native parish, and that I am as like him as one Cork-red phatie is to another—indeed, it has been often said that it would be hard to meet an O'Callaghan without a black eye in his head. He has lost his fore-teeth, however, a point in which, unfortunately, I, though his grandson, have a strong resemblance to him. The truth is, they were knocked out of him in rows, before he had reached his thirty-fifth year—a circumstance which the kind reader

[1] It had been Carleton's intention to put a story into the mouth of each of the characters sitting round Ned's fireside; but he abandoned that plan after letting Pat Frayne tell the above tale.—Ed.

will be pleased to receive in extenuation for the same defect in myself. That, however, is but a trifle, which never gave either of us much trouble.

"It pleased Providence to bring us through many hair-breadth escapes with our craniums uncracked; and when we considher that he, on taking a retrogadation of his past life, can indulge in the pleasing recollection of having broken two skulls in his fighting days, and myself one, I think we have both rason to be thankful. He was a powerful *bulliah batthagh* in his day, and never met a man able to fight him, except big Mucklemurray, who stood before him the greater part of an hour and a half, in the fair of Knockimdowney, on the day that the first great fight took place—twenty years afther the hard frost—between the O'Callaghans and the O'Hallaghans. The two men fought single hands—for both factions were willing to let them try the engagement out, that they might see what side could boast of having the best man. They began where you enter the north side of Knockimdowney, and fought successfully up to the other end, then back again to the spot where they commenced, and afterwards up to the middle of the town, right opposite to the market-place, where my grandfather, by the same-a-token, lost a grinder; but he soon took satisfaction for that, by giving Mucklemurray a tip above the eye with the end of an oak-stick dacently loaded with lead, which made the poor man feel very quare entirely for the few days that he survived it.

"Faith, if an Irishman happened to be born in Scotland, he would find it mighty inconvanient, afther losing two or three grinders in a row, to manage the hard oaten bread that they use there; for which rason, God be good to his sowl that first invented the phaties anyhow, because a man can masticate them without a tooth at all, at all. I'll engage, if larned books were consulted, it would be found out that he was an Irishman. I wonder that neither Pastorini nor Columbkill mentions anything about him in their prophecies consarning the Church. For my own part, I'm strongly inclinated to believe that it must have been Saint Patrick himself; and I think that his driving all kinds of venemous reptiles out of the kingdom is, according to the Socrastic method of argument, an undeniable proof of it. The subject, to a dead

certainty, is not touched upon in the Brehon Code,[1] nor by any of the three Psalters,[2] which is extremely odd, seeing that the earth never produced a root equal to it in the multiplying force of prolification. It is indeed the root of prosperity to a fighting people; and many a time my grandfather boasts to this day that the first bit of bread he ever ett was a phatie.

"In mentioning my grandfather's fight with Mucklemurray, I happened to name them blackguards the O'Hallaghans: hard fortune to the same set, for they have no more discretion in their quarrels than so many Egyptian mummies, African buffoons, or any other uncivilised animals. It was one of them, he that's married to my own fourth cousin, Biddy O'Callaghan, that knocked two of my grinders out, for which piece of civility I have just had the satisfaction of breaking a splinter or two in his carcase, being always honestly disposed to pay my debts.

"With respect to the O'Hallaghans, they and our family have been next neighbours since before the flood—and that's as good as two hundred years; for I believe it's one hundred and ninety-eight, anyhow, since my great-grandfather's grand-uncle's ould mare was swept out of the 'Island,' in the dead of the night, about half an hour after the whole country had been ris out of their beds by the thunder and lightning. Many a field of oats, and many a life, both of beast and Christian, was lost in it, especially of those that lived on the holmes about the edge of the river; and it was true for them that said it came before something, for the next year was one of the hottest summers ever remembered in Ireland.

"These O'Hallaghans couldn't be at peace with a saint. Before they and our faction began to quarrel, it's said that the O'Connells, or Connells, and they had been at it—and a blackguard set the same O'Connells were at all times—in fair and market, dance, wake, and berrin, setting the country on fire. Whenever they met, it was heads cracked, and bones broken, till by degrees the O'Connells fell away, one after

[1] The ancient system of laws in Ireland before the English invasion.—ED.

[2] There are only two psalters, that of Cashel and the Psalter of Tara.

another, from fighting, accidents, and hanging; so that at last there was hardly the name of one of them in the neighbourhood. The O'Hallaghans after this had the country under themselves—were the cocks of the walk entirely—who but they? A man darn't look crooked at them, or he was certain of getting his head in his fist. And when they'd get drunk in a fair, it was nothing but 'Whoo! for the O'Hallaghans!' and leaping yards high off the pavement, brandishing their cudgels over their heads, striking their heels against their hams, tossing up their hats; and when all would fail, they'd strip off their coats and trail them up and down the street, shouting, 'Who dare touch the coat of an O'Hallaghan? Where's the blackguard Connells now?' and so on, till flesh and blood couldn't stand it.

"In the course of time the whole country was turned against them; for no crowd could get together in which they didn't kick up a row, nor a bit of stray fighting couldn't be but they'd pick it up first, and if a man would venture to give them a contrairy answer he was sure to get the crame of a good welting for his pains. The very landlord was timorous of them; for when they'd get behind in their rint, hard fortune to the bailiff, or proctor, or steward he could find that would have anything to say to them. And the more wise they; for maybe a month would hardly pass till all belonging to them in the world would be in a heap of ashes; and who could say who did it? for they were as cunning as foxes.

"If one of them wanted a wife, it was nothing but find out the purtiest and richest farmer's daughter in the neighbourhood, and next march into her father's house at the dead hour of night, tie and gag every mortal in it, and off with her to some friend's place in another part of the country. Then what could be done? If the girl's parents didn't like to give in, their daughter's name was sure to be ruined; at all events, no other man would think of marrying her, and the only plan was to make the worst of a bad bargain; and God He knows it was making a bad bargain for a girl to have any matrimonial concatenation with the same O'Hallaghans; for they always had the bad drop in them, from first to last, from big to little—the blackguards But wait, it's not over with them yet.

"The bone of contintion that got between them and our faction was this circumstance: their lands and ours were divided by a river that ran down from the high mountains of Slieve Boglish, and after a coorse of eight or ten miles, disembogued itself, first into George Duffy's mill-dam, and afterwards into that superb stream, the Blackwater, that might be well and appropriately appellated the Irish Niger. This river, which, though small at first, occasionally inflated itself to such a gigantic altitude that it swept away cows, corn, and cottages, or whatever else happened to be in the way—was the march-ditch, or *merin*, between our farms. Perhaps it is worth while remarking, as a solution for natural philosophers, that these inundations were much more frequent in winter than in summer—though when they did occur in summer they were truly terrific.

"God be with the days when I and half a dozen gorsoons used to go out of a warm Sunday in summer—the bed of the river nothing but a line of white meandering stones, so hot that you could hardly stand upon them, with a small obscure thread of water creeping invisibly among them, hiding itself, as it were, from the scorching sun—except here and there that you might find a small crystal pool where the streams had accumulated. Our plan was to bring a pocketful of roach lime with us, and put it into the pool, when all the fish used to rise on the instant to the surface, gasping with open mouth for fresh air, and we had only to lift them out of the water; a nate plan, which perhaps might be adopted successfully on a more extensive scale by the Irish fisheries. Indeed, I almost regret that I did not remain in that station of life, for I was much happier than ever I was since I began to study and practice larning. But this is vagating from the subject.

"Well, then, I have said that them O'Hallaghans lived beside us, and that this stream divided our lands. About half a quarter—*i.e.*, to accommodate myself to the vulgar phraseology—or, to speak more scientifically, one-eighth of a mile from our house, was as purty a hazel glen as you'd wish to see, near half a mile long—its developments and proportions were truly classical. In the bottom of this glen was a small green island, about twelve yards, diametrically, of Irish

admeasurement, that is to say, be the same more or less—at all events, it lay in the way of the river, which, however, ran towards the O'Hallaghan side, and consequently the island was our property.

"Now, you'll observe that this river had been for ages the *merin*[1] between the two farms, for they both belonged to separate landlords; and so long as it kept the O'Hallaghan side of the little peninsula in question, there could be no dispute about it, for all was clear. One wet winter, however, it seemed to change its mind upon the subject; for it wrought and wore away a passage for itself on our side of the island, and by that means took part, as it were, with the O'Hallaghans, leaving the territory which had been our property for centhries, in their possession. This was a vexatious change to us, and indeed eventually produced very feudal consequences. No sooner had the stream changed sides than the O'Hallaghans claimed the island as theirs, according to their tenement; and we, having had it for such length of time in our possession, could not break ourselves of the habitude of occupying it. They incarcerated our cattle, and we incarcerated theirs. They summoned us to their landlord, who was a magistrate; and we summoned them to ours, who was another. The verdicts were north and south. Their landlord gave it in favour of them, and ours in favour of us. The one said he had law on his side; the other, that he had proscription and possession, length of time and usage.

"The two Squires then fought a challenge upon the head of it, and what was more singular, upon the disputed spot itself; the one standing on their side, the other on ours, for it was just twelve paces every way. Their friend was a small, light man, with legs like drumsticks; the other was a large, able-bodied gentleman, with a red face and hooked nose. They exchanged two shots, one only of which—the second—took effect. It pastured upon their landlord's spindle leg, on which he held it out, exclaiming, that while he lived he would never fight another challenge with his antagonist, 'because,' said he, looking at his own spindle shank, 'the man who could hit that could hit anything.'

[1] Boundary.

"We then were advised by an attorney to go to law with them, and they were advised by another attorney to go to law with us; accordingly, we did so, and in the course of eight or nine years it might have been decided. But just as the legal term approximated in which the decision was to be announced, the river divided itself with mathematical exactitude on each side of the island. This altered the state and law of the question *in toto;* but, in the meantime, both we and the O'Hallaghans were nearly fractured by the expenses. Now, during the lawsuit, we usually houghed and mutilated each other's cattle, according as they trespassed the premises. This brought on the usual concomitants of various battles, fought and won by both sides, and occasioned the lawsuit to be dropped; for we found it a mighty inconvanient matter to fight it out both ways—by the same-a-token that I think it a great proof of stultity to go to law at all, at all, as long as a person is able to take it into his own management. For the only incongruity in the matter is this—that in the one case a set of lawyers have the law in their hands, and in the other, that you have it in your own—that's the only difference, and 'tis easy knowing where the advantage lies.

"We, however, ped the most of the expenses, and would have ped them all with the greatest integrity, were it not that our attorney, when about to issue an execution against our property, happened somehow to be shot one evening as he returned home from a dinner which was given by him that was attorney for the O'Hallaghans. Many a boast the O'Hallaghans made, before the quarrelling between us and them commenced, that they'd sweep the streets with the 'fighting' O'Callaghans, which was an epithet that was occasionally applied to our family. We differed, however, materially from them; for we were honourable, never starting out in dozens on a single man or two and beating him into insignificance. A couple, or maybe, when irritated, three, were the most we ever set at a single enemy; and if we left him lying in a state of imperception, it was the most we ever did, except in a regular confliction, when a man is justified in saving his own skull by breaking one of an opposite faction. For the truth of the business is, that he who breaks the skull of him

who endeavours to break his own, is safest; and surely when a man is driven to such an alternative the choice is unhesitating.

"O'Hallaghans' attorney, however, had better luck. They were, it is true, rather in the retrograde with him touching the law charges, and of coorse it was only candid in him to look for his own. One morning he found that two of his horses had been executed by some incendiary unknown, in the course of the night; and on going to look at them, he found a taste of a notice posted on the inside of the stable door, giving him intelligence that if he did not find a *horpus corpus*[1] whereby to transfer his body out of the country, he would experience a fate parallel to that of his brother lawyer or the horses. And undoubtedly, if honest people never perpetrated worse than banishing such varmin, along with proctors and drivers of all kinds, out of a civilised country, they would not be so very culpable or atrocious.

"After this, the lawyer went to reside in Dublin; and the only bodily injury he received was the death of a land-agent and a bailiff, who lost their lives faithfully in driving for rent. They died, however, successfully; the bailiff having been provided for nearly a year before the agent was sent to give an account of his stewardship — as the authorised version has it.

"The occasion on which the first rencounter between us and the O'Hallaghans took place, was a peaceable one. Several of our respective friends undertook to produce a friendly and oblivious potation between us—it was at a berrin belonging to a corpse who was related to us both; and certainly in the beginning we were all as thick as whigged milk. But there is no use now in dwelling too long upon that circumstance: let it be sufficient to assert that the accommodation was effectuated by fists and cudgels on both sides—the first man that struck a blow being one of the friends that wished to bring about the tranquillity. From that out, the play commenced, and God He knows when it may end; for no dacent faction could give in to another faction, without losing their character, and being kicked, and cuffed, and kilt every week in the year.

[1] *Habeas Corpus.*

"It is the great battle, however, which I am after going to describe—that in which we and the O'Hallaghans had contrived, one way or other, to have the parish divided—one-half for them, and the other for us; and upon my credibility, it is no exaggeration to declare that the whole parish, though ten miles by six, assembled itself in the town of Knockimdowney upon this interesting occasion. In thruth, Ireland ought to be a land of mathemathitians; for I'm sure her population is well trained, at all events, in the two sciences of multiplication and division. Before I adventure, however, upon the narration, I must wax pathetic a little, and then proceed with the main body of the story.

"Poor Rose O'Hallaghan!—or, as she was designated, Rose *Galh*, or Fair Rose, and sometimes simply Rose Hallaghan, because the detention of the big O would produce an afflatus in the pronunciation that would be mighty inconvanient to such as did not understand oratory—besides that, the Irish are rather fond of sending the liquids in a guttheral direction. Poor Rose! that faction fight was a black day to her, the sweet innocent! when it was well known that there wasn't a man, woman, or child on either side that wouldn't lay their hands under her feet. However, in order to insense the reader better into her character, I will commence a small sub-narration, which will afterwards emerge into the parent stream of the story.

"The chapel of Knockimdowney is a slated house, without any ornament, except a set of wooden cuts, painted red and blue, that are placed *seriatim* around the square of the building in the internal side. Fourteen[1] of these suspend at equal distances on the walls, each set in a painted frame; these constitute a certain species of country devotion. It is usual on Sundays for such of the congregations as are most inclined to piety to genuflect at the first of these pictures, and commence a certain number of prayers to it; after the repitition of which, they travel on their knees along the bare earth to the second, where they repate another prayer peculiar to that, and so on, till they finish the grand 'tower' of the interior. Such, however, as are not especially dictated to this

[1] These are called "The Stations of the Cross."

kind of locomotive prayer, collect together in various knots through the chapel, and amuse themselves by auditing or narrating anecdotes, discussing policy, or detraction; and in case it be summer, and a day of a fine texture, they scatter themselves into little crowds on the chapel green, or lie at their length upon the grass in listless groups, giving way to chat and laughter.

"In this mode, laired on the sunny side of the ditches and hedges, or collected in rings round that respectable character the Academician of the village, or some other well known *Shanahus*, or story-teller, they amuse themselves till the priest's arrival. Perhaps, too, some walking geographer of a pilgrim may happen to be present; and if there be, he is sure to draw a crowd about him, in spite of all the efforts of the learned Academician to the reverse. It is no unusual thing to see such a vagrant, in all the vanity of conscious sanctimony, standing in the middle of the attentive peasants, like the nave and fellows of a cart-wheel—if I may be permitted the loan of an apt similitude—repeating some piece of unfathomable and labyrinthine devotion, or perhaps warbling, from Stenthorian lungs, some *melodia sacra*, in an untranslatable tongue; or, it may be, exhibiting the mysterious power of an amber bade fastened as a decade to his *padareens*, lifting a chaff or light bit of straw by the force of its attraction. This is an exploit which causes many an eye to turn from the bades to his own bearded face, with a hope, as it were, of being able to catch a glimpse of the lurking sanctimony by which the knave hoaxes them in the miraculous.[1]

"The amusements of the females are also nearly such as I have drafted out. Nosegays of the darlings might be seen sated on green banks, or sauntering about with a sly intention of coming in compact with their sweethearts, or, like bachelor's buttons in smiling rows, criticising the young men as they pass. Others of them might be seen screened behind a hedge, with their backs to the spectators, taking the papers off their curls before a small bit of looking-glass placed

[1] Devices of this kind were at one time palmed off on the people by impostors as miraculous manifestations.—ED.

against the ditch; or perhaps putting on their shoes and stockings—which phrase can be used only by authority of the figure, *heusteron proteron*—inasmuch as if they put on the shoes first, you persave, it would be a scientific job to get on the stockings after; but it's an idiomatical expression, and therefore justifiable. However, it's a general custom in the country, which I dare to say has not yet spread into large cities, for the young women to walk barefooted to the chapel, or within a short distance of it, that they may exhibit their bleached thread stockings and well-greased slippers to the best advantage, not pertermitting a well-turned ankle and neat leg, which, I may fearlessly assert, my fair country-women can show against any other nation, living or dead.

"One sunny Sabbath the congregation of Knockimdowney were thus assimilated, amusing themselves in the manner I have just outlined. A series of country girls sat on a little green mount, called the Rabbit Bank, from the circumstance of its having been formerly an open burrow, though of late years it has been closed. It was near twelve o'clock, the hour at which Father Luke O'Shaughran was generally seen topping the rise of the hill at Larry Mulligan's public-house, jogging on his bay hack at something between a walk and a trot—that is to say, his horse moved his fore and hind legs on the off side at one motion, and the fore and hind legs of the near side in another, going at a kind of dog's trot, like the pace of an idiot with sore feet in a shower—a pace, indeed, to which the animal had been set for the last sixteen years, but beyond which no force, or entreaty, or science, or power, either divine or human, of his reverence, could drive him. As yet, however, he had not become apparent; and the girls already mentioned were discussing the pretensions which several of their acquaintances had to dress or beauty.

"'Peggy,' said Katty Carroll to her companion, Peggy Donohoe, 'were you out [1] last Sunday?"

"No, in troth, Katty; I was disappointed in getting my shoes from Paddy Malone, though I left him the measure of my foot three weeks agone, and gave him a thousand warnings

[1] Understood for "at mass."

to make them "duck-nebs," but instead of that,' said she, holding out a very purty foot, 'he has made them as sharp in the toe as a pick-axe, and a full mile too short for me. But why do ye ax was I out, Katty?'

"'Oh, nothing,' responded Katty, 'only that you missed a sight, anyway.'

"'What was it, Katty, *a-hagur?*' asked her companion, with mighty great curiosity.

"'Why, nothing less, indeed, nor Rose Cuillenan, decked out in a white muslin gown, and a black sprush bonnet, tied under her chin wid a silk ribbon, no less; but what killed us out and out was—you wouldn't guess?'

"'*Arrah,* how could I guess, woman alive? A silk handkerchy, maybe; for I wouldn't doubt the same Rose but she would be setting herself up for the likes of sich a thing.'

"'It's herself that had, as red as scarlet, about her neck; but that's not it.'

"'*Arrah,* Katty, tell it to us at wanst—out with it, *a-hagur;* sure there's no treason in it, anyhow.'

"'Why, thin, nothing less nor a crass-bar red and white pocket-handkerchy, to wipe her pretty complexion wid!'

"To this Peggy replied by a loud laugh, in which it was difficult to say whether there was more of sathir than astonishment.

"'A pocket-handkerchy!' she exclaimed; 'musha, are we alive afther that, at all, at all! Why, that bates Molly M'Cullagh and her red mantle entirely. I'm sure, but it's well come up for the likes of her, a poor imperint crathur, that's sprung from nothing, to give herself sich airs.'

"'Molly M'Cullagh, indeed,' said Katty—'why, they oughtn't to be mintioned in the one day, woman; Molly's come of a dacent ould stock, and kind mother for her to keep herself in genteel ordher at all times—she seen nothing else, and can afford it—not all as one as the other flipe,[1] that would go to the world's end for a bit of dress.'

"'Sure she thinks she's a beauty too, if you plase,' said Peggy, tossing her head with an air of disdain. 'But tell us, Katty, how did the muslin sit upon her at all, the upsetting crathur?'"

[1] One who is flippant.

"'Why, for all the world like a shift on a May-powl, or a stocking on a body's nose—only, nothing killed us outright but the pocket-handkerchy!'

"'But,' said the other, 'what could we expect from a proud piece like her, that brings a manwill[1] to mass every Sunday, purtending she can read in it, and Jem Finigan saw the wrong side of the book toardst her the Sunday of the Purcession!'[2]

"At this hit they both formed another risible junction, quite as sarcastic as the former—in the midst of which the innocent object of their censure, dressed in all her obnoxious finery, came up and joined them. She was scarcely sated—I blush to the very point of my pen during the manuscription—when the confabulation assumed a character directly antipodial to that which marked the precedent dialogue.

"'My gracious, Rose, but that's a purty thing you have got in your gown! where did you buy it?'

"'Och, thin, not a one of myself likes it over much. I'm sorry I didn't buy a gingham; I could have got a beautiful patthern, all out, for two shillings less, but they don't wash so well as this. I bought it in Paddy Gartland's, Peggy."

"'Troth, it's nothing else but a great beauty; I didn't see anything on you this long time becomes you so well, and I've remarked that you always look best in white.'

"'Who made it, Rose?' inquired Katty, 'for it sits illegant.'

"'Indeed,' replied Rose, 'for the differ of the price I thought it better to bring it to Peggy Boyle and be sartin of not having it spoiled. Nelly Keenan made the last, and although there was a full breadth more in it nor this, bad cess to the one of her but spoiled it on me; it was ever so much too short in the body, and too tight in the sleeves, and then I had no step at all, at all.'

"'The sprush bonnet is exactly the fit for the gown,' observed Katty; 'the black and the white's jist the cut—how many yards had you, Rose?'

"'Jist ten and a half; but the half-yard was for the tucks.'

[1] Manual—a Catholic prayer-book.

[2] The procession which goes round the chapel, inside and sometimes outside. A priest carries the "Host" under a canopy.

"'Ay, faix! and brave full tucks she left in it; ten would do me, Rose.'

"'Ten! no nor ten and a half. You're a size bigger nor me at the laste, Peggy; but you'd be asy fitted, you're so well made.'

"'Rose, darling,' said Peggy, 'that's a great beauty, and shows off your complexion all to pieces; you have no notion how well you look in it and the sprush.'

"In a few minutes after this, her namesake, Rose *Galh* O'Hallaghan, came towards the chapel, in society with her father, mother, and her two sisters. The eldest, Mary, was about twenty-one; Rose, who was the second, about nineteen, or scarcely that; and Nancy, the junior of the three, about twice seven.

"'There's the O'Hallaghans,' says Rose.

"'Ay,' replied Katty; 'you may talk of beauty now. Did you ever lay your two eyes on the likes of Rose for downright —musha, if myself knows what to call it—but, anyhow, she's the lovely crathur to look at.'

"Kind reader, without a single disrespectful insinuation against any portion of the fair sex, you may judge what Rose O'Hallaghan must have been when even these three were necessitated to praise her in her absence.

"'I'll warrant,' observed Katty, 'we'll soon be after seeing John O'Callaghan' (he was my own cousin) 'sthrolling afther them, at his ase.'

"'Why?' asked Rose; 'what makes you say that?'

"'Bekase,' replied the other, 'I have a rason for it.'

"'Sure, John O'Callaghan wouldn't be thinking of her,' observed Rose, 'and their families would see other shot; their factions would never have a crass marriage, anyhow.'

"'Well,' said Peggy, 'it's the thousand pities that the same two couldn't go together; for, fair and handsome as Rose is, you'll not deny but John comes up to her; but faix, sure enough it's they that's the proud people on both sides, and dangerous to make or meddle with, not saying that ever there was the likes of the same two for dacency and peaceableness among either of the factions.'

"'Didn't I tell yees?' cried Katty—'look at him now, staling afther her, and it'll be the same thing going home

agin; and if Rose is not much belied, it's not a bit displasing to her, they say.'

"'Between ourselves,' observed Peggy, 'it would be no wondher the darling young crathur would fall in love with him, for you might thravel the counthry afore you'd meet with his fellow for face and figure.'

"'There's Father Ned,' remarked Katty; 'we had betther get into the chapel before the scroodgin comes an, or your bonnet and gown, Rose, won't be the betther for it.'

"They now proceeded to the chapel, and those who had been amusing themselves after the same mode, followed their exemplar. In a short time the hedges and ditches adjoining the chapel were quite in solitude, with the exception of a few persons from the extreme parts of the parish, who might be seen running with all possible velocity 'to overtake mass,' as the phrase on that point expresses itself.

"The chapel of Knockimdowney was situated at the foot of a range of lofty mountains; a by-road went past the very door, which had under subjection a beautiful extent of cultivated country, diversificated by hill and dale, or rather by hill and hollow, for as far as my own geographical knowledge went I have uniformly found them inseparable. It was also ornamented with the waving verdure of rich corn-fields and meadows, not pretermitting phatie-fields in full blossom—a part of rural landscape which, to my utter astonishment, has escaped the pen of poet and the brush of painter; although I will risk my reputation as a man of pure and categorical taste, if a finer ingredient in the composition of a landscape could be found than a field of Cork-red phaties, or Moroky blacks in full bloom, allowing a man to judge by the pleasure they confer upon the eye, and therefore to the heart. About a mile up from the chapel, towards the south, a mountain-stream—not the one already intimated—over which there was no bridge, crossed the road. But in lieu of a bridge there was a long double plank laid over it, from bank to bank; and as the river was broad, and not sufficiently incarcerated within its channel, the neighbours were necessitated to throw these planks across the narrowest part they could find in the contiguity of the road. This part was consequently the deepest, and in floods the most dangerous;

for the banks were elevated as far as they went, and quite tortuositous.

"Shortly after the priest had entered the chapel, it was observed that the hemisphere became, of a sudden, unusually obscure, though the preceding part of the day had not only been uncloudously bright, but hot in a most especial manner. The obscurity, however, increased rapidly, accompanied by that gloomy stillness which always takes precedence of a storm, and fills the mind with vague and interminable terror. But this ominous silence was not long unfractured; for soon after the first appearance of the gloom a flash of lightning quivered through the chapel, followed by an extravagantly loud clap of thunder, which shook the very glass in the windows, and filled the congregation to the brim with terror. Their dismay, however, would have been infinitely greater, only for the presence of his reverence, and the confidence which might be traced to the solemn occasion on which they were assimilated.

"From this moment the storm became progressive in dreadful magnitude, and the thunder, in concomitance with the most vivid flashes of lightning, pealed through the sky with an awful grandeur and magnificence, that were exalted, and even rendered more sublime, by the still solemnity of religious worship. Every heart now prayed fervently, every spirit shrunk into a deep sense of its own guilt and helplessness, and every conscience was terror-stricken, as the voice of an angry God thundered out of His temple of storms through the heavens; for truly, as the authorised version has it, 'Darkness was under His feet, and His pavilion round about was dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies, because He was wroth.'

"The rain now condescended in even-down torrents, and thunder succeeded thunder in deep and terrific peals, whilst the roar of the gigantic echoes that deepened and reverberated among the glens and hollows — 'laughing in their mountain mirth' — hard fortune to me, but they made the flesh creep on my bones!

"This lasted for an hour, when the thunder slackened; but the rain still continued. As soon as mass was over, and the storm had elapsed, except an odd peal which might be

heard rolling at a distance behind the hills, the people began gradually to recover their spirits, and enter into confabulation; but to venture out was still impracticable. For about another hour it rained incessantly, after which it ceased; the hemisphere became lighter, and the sun shone out once more upon the countenance of nature with his former brightness. The congregation then decanted itself out of the chapel—the spirits of the people dancing with that remarkable buoyancy or juvenility which is felt after a thunderstorm, when the air is calm, soople, and balmy, and all nature garmented with glittering verdure and light. The crowd next began to commingle on their way home, and to make the usual observations upon the extraordinary storm which had just passed, and the probable effect it would produce on the fruit and agriculture of the neighbourhood.

"When the three young women whom we have already introduced to our respectable readers, had evacuated the chapel, they determined to substantiate a certitude, as far as their observation could reach, as to the truth of what Katty Carroll had hinted at in reference to John O'Callaghan's attachment to Rose *Galh* O'Hallaghan, and her taciturn approval of it. For this purpose they kept their eye upon John, who certainly seemed in no especial hurry home, but lingered upon the chapel green in a very careless method. Rose *Galh*, however, soon made her appearance, and after going up the chapel road a short space, John slyly walked at some distance behind, without seeming to pay her any particular notice, whilst a person up to the secret might observe Rose's bright eye sometimes peeping back to see if he was after her. In this manner they proceeded until they came to the river, which, to their great alarm, was almost fluctuating over its highest banks.

"A crowd was now assembled, consulting as to the safest method of crossing the planks, under which the red boiling current ran, with less violence, it is true, but much deeper, than in any other part of the stream. The final decision was that the very young and the old, and such as were feeble, should proceed by a circuit of some miles to a bridge that crossed it, and that the young men should place themselves on their knees along the planks, their hands locked in each

other, thus forming a support on one side, upon which such as had courage to venture across might lean, in case of accident or megrim. Indeed, anybody that had able nerves might have crossed the planks without this precaution, had they been dry; but in consequence of the rain, and the frequent attrition of feet, they were quite slippery; and, besides, the flood rolled terrifically two or three yards below them, which might be apt to beget a megrim that would not be felt if there was no flood.

"When this expedient had been hit upon, several young men volunteered themselves to put it in practice; and in a short time a considerable number of both sexuals crossed over, without the occurrence of any unpleasant accident. Paddy O'Hallaghan and his family had been stationed for some time on the bank, watching the success of the plan; and as it appeared not to be attended with any particular danger, they also determined to make the attempt. About a perch below the planks stood John O'Callaghan, watching the progress of those who were crossing them, but taking no part in what was going forward. The river under the planks, and for some perches above and below them, might be about ten feet deep; but to those who could swim it was less perilous, should any accident befall them, than those parts where the current was more rapid but shallower. The water here boiled, and bubbled, and whirled about; but it was slow, and its yellow surface unbroken by rocks or fords.

"The first of the O'Hallaghans that ventured over it was the youngest, who, being captured by the hand, was encouraged by many cheerful expressions from the young men who were clinging to the planks. She got safe over, however; and when she came to the end, one who was stationed on the bank gave her a joyous pull that translated her several yards upon *terra firma.*

"'Well, Nancy,' he observed, '*you're* safe, anyhow; and if I don't dance at your wedding for this, I'll never say you're dacent.'

"To this Nancy gave a jocular promise, and he resumed his station, that he might be ready to render similar assistance to her next sister. Rose *Galh* then went to the edge of the plank several times, but her courage as often refused to

be forthcoming. During her hesitation, John O'Callaghan stooped down, and privately untied his shoes, then unbuttoned his waistcoat, and very gently, being unwilling to excite notice, slipped the knot of his cravat. At long last, by the encouragement of those who were on the plank, Rose attempted the passage, and had advanced as far as the middle of it, when a fit of dizziness and alarm seized her with such violence that she lost all consciousness—a circumstance of which those who handed her along were ignorant. The consequence, as might be expected, was dreadful; for as one of the young men was receiving her hand, that he might pass her to the next, she lost her momentum, and was instantaneously precipitated into the boiling current.

"The wild and fearful cry of horror that succeeded this cannot be laid on paper. The eldest sister fell into strong convulsions, and several of the other females fainted on the spot. The mother did not faint; but, like Lot's wife, she seemed to have been translated into stone: her hands became clenched convulsively, her teeth locked, her nostrils dilated, and her eyes shot halfway out of her head. There she stood, looking upon her daughter struggling in the flood, with a fixed gaze of wild and impotent frenzy, that, for fearfulness, beat the thunderstorm all to nothing. The father rushed to the edge of the river, oblivious of his incapability to swim, determined to save her or lose his own life, which latter would have been a *dead* certainty had he ventured; but he was prevented by the crowd, who pointed out to him the madness of such a project.

"'For God's sake, Paddy, don't attimpt it,' they exclaimed, 'except you wish to lose your own life, widout being able to save hers; no man could swim in that flood, and it upwards of ten feet deep.'

"Their arguments, however, were lost upon him; for, in fact, he was insensible to everything but his child's preservation. He therefore only answered their remonstrances by attempting to make another plunge into the river.

"'Let me alone, will yees,' said he—'let me alone! I'll either save my child, Rose, or die along with her! How could I live after her? Merciful God, any of them but her! Oh! Rose, darling,' he exclaimed, 'the favourite of my heart

—will no one save you?' All this passed in less than a minute.

"Just as these words were uttered, a plunge was heard a few yards above the bridge, and a man appeared in the flood, making his way with rapid strokes to the drowning girl. Another cry now arose from the spectators. 'It's John O'Callaghan,' they shouted—'it's John O'Callaghan, and they'll be both lost.' 'No,' exclaimed others; 'if it's in the power of man to save her, he will!' 'Oh, blessed father, she's lost!' now burst from all present; for, after having struggled and been kept floating for some time by her garments, she at length sunk, apparently exhausted and senseless, and the thief of a flood flowed over her, as if she had been under its surface.

"When O'Callaghan saw that she went down, he raised himself up in the water, and cast his eye towards that part of the bank opposite which she disappeared, evidently, as it proved, that he might have a mark to guide him in fixing on the proper spot where to plunge after her. When he came to the place, he raised himself again in the stream, and calculating that she must by this time have been borne some distance from the spot where she sank, he gave a stroke or two down the river, and disappeared after her. This was followed by another cry of horror and despair; for somehow the idea of desolation which marks at all times a deep, over-swollen torrent, heightened by the bleak mountain scenery around them, and the dark, angry voracity of the river where they had sunk, might have impressed the spectators with utter hopelessness as to the fate of those now engulfed in its vortex. This, however, I leave to those who are deeper read in philosophy than I am.

"An awful silence succeeded the last shrill exclamation, broken only by the hoarse rushing of the waters, whose wild, continuous roar, booming hollowly and dismally in the ear, might be heard at a great distance over all the country. But a new sensation soon invaded the multitude; for, after the lapse of about a minute, John O'Callaghan emerged from the flood, bearing in his sinister hand the body of his own Rose *Galh*—for it's he that loved her tenderly. A peal of joy congratulated them from a thousand voices. Hundreds of

directions were given to him how to act to the best advantage. Two young men in especial, who were both dying about the lovely creature that he held, were quite anxious to give advice.

"'Bring her to the other side, John, *ma bouchal;* it's the safest,' said Larry Carty.

"'Will you let him alone, Carty?' said Simon Tracy, who was the other. 'You'll only put him in a perplexity.'

"But Carty should order in spite of everything. He kept bawling out, however, so loud, that John raised his eye to see what he meant, and was near losing hold of Rose. This was too much for Tracy, who ups with his fist and downs him —so they both at it; for no one there could take themselves off those that were in danger to interfere between them. But at all events, no earthly thing can happen among Irishmen without a fight.

"The father during this stood breathless, his hands clasped, and his eyes turned to heaven, praying in anguish for the delivery of his darling. The mother's look was still wild and fixed, her eyes glazed, and her muscles hard and stiff; evidently she was insensible to all that was going forward; while large drops of paralytic agony hung upon her cold brow. Neither of the sisters had yet recovered; nor could those who supported them turn their eyes from the more imminent danger, to pay them any particular attention. Many, also, of the other females, whose feelings were too much wound up when the accident occurred, now fainted when they saw she was likely to be rescued; but most of them were weeping with delight and gratitude.

"When John brought her to the surface, he paused a moment to recover breath and collectedness; he then caught her by the left arm near the shoulder, and cut, in a slanting direction, down the stream, to a watering-place, where a slope had been formed in the bank. But he was already too far down to be able to work across the stream to this point; for it was here much stronger and more rapid than under the planks. Instead, therefore, of reaching the slope, he found himself, in spite of every effort to the contrary, about a perch below it; and except he could gain this point, against the strong rush of the flood, there was very little hope of

being able to save either her or himself, for he was now much exhausted.

"Hitherto, therefore, all was still doubtful, while strength was fast failing him. In this trying and almost helpless situation, with an admirable presence of mind, he adopted the only expedient which could possibly enable him to reach the bank. On finding himself receding down, instead of advancing up, the current, he approached the bank, which was here very deep and perpendicular; he then sank his fingers into the firm blue clay with which it was stratified, and by this means advanced, bit by bit, up the stream, having no other force by which to propel himself against it. After this mode did he breast the current with all his strength—which must have been prodigious, or he never could have borne it out—until he reached the slope, and got from the influence of the tide, into dead water. On arriving here, his hand was caught by one of the young men present, who stood up to the neck, waiting his approach. A second man stood behind him, holding his other hand, a link being thus formed that reached out to the firm bank; and a good pull now brought them both to the edge of the liquid. On finding bottom, John took his *Colleen Galh* in his own arms, carried her out, and pressing his lips to hers, laid her in the bosom of her father; then, after taking another kiss of the young drowned flower, he burst into tears, and fell powerless beside her. The truth is, the spirit that kept him firm was now exhausted; both his legs and arms having become nerveless by the exertion.

"Hitherto her father took no notice of John, for how could he, seeing that he was entirely wrapped up in his daughter? and the question was, though rescued from the flood, if life was in her. The sisters were by this time recovered, and weeping over her, along with the father—and indeed with all present; but the mother could not be made to comprehend what they were about, at all, at all. The country people used every means with which they were intimate to recover Rose, she was brought instantly to a farmer's house beside the spot, put into a warm bed, covered over with hot salt, wrapped in half-scorched blankets, and made subject to every other mode of treatment that could possibly revoke the functions of life. John had now got a dacent draught of whisky, which revived

him. He stood over her, when he could be admitted, watching for the symptomatics of her revival; all, however, was vain. He now determined to try another course: by-and-by he stooped, put his mouth to her mouth, and drawing in his breath, respired with all his force from the bottom of his very heart into hers; this he did several times rapidly—faith, a tender and agreeable operation, anyhow. But mark the consequence: in less than a minute her white bosom heaved, her breath returned, her pulse began to play, she opened her eyes, and felt his tears of love raining warmly on her pale cheek!

"For years before this no two of these opposite factions had spoken; nor up to this moment had John and they, even upon this occasion, exchanged a monosyllable. The father now looked at him—the tears stood afresh in his eyes; he came forward, stretched out his hand—it was received; and the next moment he fell into John's arms and cried like an infant.

"When Rose recovered, she seemed as if striving to recordate what had happened; and after two or three minutes, inquired from her sister, in a weak but sweet voice, 'Who saved me?'

"'"'Twas John O'Callaghan, Rose, darling,' replied the sister, in tears, 'that ventured his own life into the boiling flood to save yours—and did save it, jewel.'

"Rose's eye glanced at John—and I only wish, as I am a bachelor not further than my forty-seventh, that I may ever have the happiness to get such a glance from two blue eyes as she gave him that moment; a faint smile played about her mouth; and a slight blush lit up her fair cheek, like the evening sunbeams on the virgin snow, as the poets have said, for the five-hundredth time, to my own personal knowledge. She then extended her hand, which John, you may be sure, was no way backward in receiving, and the tears of love and gratitude ran silently down her cheeks.

"It is not necessary to detail the circumstances of this day further; let it be sufficient to say that a reconciliation took place between those two branches of the O'Hallaghan and O'Callaghan families, in consequence of John's heroism and Rose's soft persuasion, and that there was also every perspective

of the two factions being penultimately amalgamated. For nearly a century they had been pell-mell at it, whenever and wherever they could meet. Their forefathers who had been engaged in the lawsuit about the island which I have mentioned, were dead and petrified in their graves; and the little peninsula in the glen was gradationally worn away by the river, till nothing remained but a desert, upon a small scale, of sand and gravel. Even the ruddy, able-bodied Squire, with the longitudinal nose projecting out of his face like a broken arch and the small fiery magistrate, both of whom had fought the duel, for the purpose of setting forth a good example and bringing the dispute to a peaceable conclusion, were also dead. The very memory of the original contention had been lost (except that it was preserved along with the cranium of my grandfather), or became so indistinct that the parties fastened themselves on some more modern provocation, which they kept in view until another fresh motive would start up, and so on. I know not, however, whether it was fair to expect them to give up at once the agreeable recreation of fighting. It's not easy to abolish old customs, particularly diversions; and every one knows that this is the national amusement of the finest peasantry on the face of the earth.

"There were, it is true, many among both factions who saw the matter in this reasonable light, and who wished rather, if it were to cease, that it should die away by degrees, from the battle of the whole parish, equally divided between the factions, to the subordinate row between certain members of them—from that to the faint broil of certain families, and so on, to the single-handed play between individuals. At all events, one-half of them were for peace, and two-thirds of them equally divided between peace and war.

"For three months after the accident which befell Rose *Galh* O'Hallaghan, both factions had been tolentary quiet—that is to say, they had no general engagement. Some slight skirmishes certainly did take place on market nights, when the drop was in, and the spirits up; but in those neither John nor Rose's immediate families took any part. The fact was that John and Rose were on the evening of matrimony; the match had been made, the day appointed, and every other necessary stipulation ratified. Now, John was as fine a young

man as you would meet in a day's travelling; and as for Rose, her name went far and near for beauty—and with justice, for the sun never shone on a fairer, meeker, or modester virgin than Rose *Galh* O'Hallaghan.

It might be, indeed, that there were those on both sides who thought that, if the marriage was obstructed, their own sons and daughters would have a better chance. Rose had many admirers; they might have envied John his happiness. Many fathers, on the other side, might have wished their sons to succeed with Rose. Whether I am sinister in this conjecture is more than I can say. I grant, indeed, that a great portion of it is speculation on my part. The wedding-day, however, was arranged; but unfortunately the fair day of Knockimdowney occurred, in the rotation of natural time, precisely one week before it. I know not from what motive it proceeded, but the factions on both sides were never known to make a more light-hearted preparation for battle. Cudgels of all sorts and sizes (and some of them, to my own knowledge, great beauties) were provided.

"I believe, I may as well take this opportunity of saying, that real Irish cudgels must be root-growing, either oak, black-thorn, or crab-tree—although crab-tree, by the way, is apt to fly. They should not be too long—three feet and a few inches is an accommodating length. They must be naturally top-heavy, and have around the end that is to make acquaintance with the cranium three or four natural lumps, calculated to divide the flesh in the natest manner, and to leave, if possible, the smallest taste in life of pit in the skull. But if a good root-growing *kippeen* be light at the fighting end, or possess not the proper number of knobs, a hole a few inches deep is to be bored in the end, which must be filled with melted lead. This gives it a widow-and-orphan-making quality, a child-bereaving touch, altogether very desirable. If, however, the top splits in the boring, which in awkward hands is not uncommon, the defect may be remediated by putting on an iron ferrule, and driving two or three strong nails into it, simply to preserve it from flying off—not that an Irishman is ever at a loss for weapons when in a fight; for so long as a scythe, flail, spade, pitchfork, or stone is at hand, he feels quite contented with the lot of

war. No man, as they say of 'great statesmen, is more fertile in expedients during a row; which, by the way, I take to be a good quality, at all events.

"I remember the fair day of Knockimdowney well; it has kept me from griddle-bread and tough nutriment ever since. Hard fortune to Jack Roe O'Hallaghan! No man had better teeth than I had till I met with him that day. He fought stoutly on his own side; but he was ped then for the same basting that fell to me, though not by my hands, if to get his jaw dacently divided into three halves could be called a fair liquidation of an old debt—it was equal to twenty shillings in the pound, anyhow.

"There had not been a larger fair in the town of Knockimdowney for years. The day was dark and sunless, but sultry. On looking through the crowd I could see no man without a cudgel; yet, what was strange, there was no certainty of any sport. Several desultory scrimmages had locality; but they were altogether sequestered from the great factions of the O's. Except that it was pleasant, and stirred one's blood to look at them, or occasioned the cudgels to be grasped more firmly, there was no personal interest felt by any of us in them; they therefore began and ended, here and there, through the fair, like mere flashes in the pan, dying in their own smoke.

"The blood of every prolific nation is naturally hot, but when that hot blood is inflamed by ardent spirits it is not to be supposed that men should be cool; and, God He knows, there is not on the level surface of this habitable globe a nation that has been so thoroughly inflamed by 'ardent spirits' as Ireland.

"Up till four o'clock that day the factions were quiet. Several relations on both sides had been invited to drink by John and Rose's families, for the purpose of establishing a good feeling between them. But this was, after all, hardly to be expected, for they hated one another with an ardency much too good-humoured and buoyant; and, between ourselves, to bring Paddy over a bottle is a very equivocal mode of giving him an anti-cudgelling disposition. After the hour of four several of the factions were getting very friendly, which I knew at the time to be a bad sign; many of them

nodded to each other, which I knew to be a worse one; and some of them shook hands with the greatest cordiality, which I no sooner saw than I slipped the knot of my cravat, and held myself in preparation for the sport.

"I have often had occasion to remark—and few men, let me tell you, had finer opportunities of doing so—the differential symptomatics between a party fight, that is, a battle between Orangemen and Ribbonmen, and one between two Roman Catholic factions. There is something infinitely more anxious, silent, and deadly in the compressed vengeance and the hope of slaughter which characterise a party fight, than is to be seen in a battle between factions. The truth is, the enmity is not so deep and well grounded in the latter as in the former. The feeling is not political nor religious between the factions; whereas in the other it is both, which is a mighty great advantage; for when this is adjuncted to an intense personal hatred, and a sense of wrong, probably arising from a too intimate recollection of the leaded blackthorn, or the awkward death of some relative by the musket or the bayonet, it is apt to produce very purty fighting and much respectable retribution.

"In a party fight a prophetic sense of danger hangs, as it were, over the crowd—the very air is loaded with apprehension; and the vengeance-burst is preceded by a close, thick darkness, almost sulphury, that is more terrifical than the conflict itself, though clearly less dangerous and fatal. The scowl of the opposing parties, the blanched cheeks, the knit brows, and the grinding teeth, not pretermitting the deadly gleams that shoot from their kindled eyes, are ornaments which a plain battle between factions cannot boast, but which, notwithstanding, are very suitable to the fierce and gloomy silence of that premeditated vengeance, which burns with such intensity in the heart, and scorches up the vitals into such a thirst for blood. Not but they come by different means to the same conclusion; because it is the feeling, and not altogether the manner of operation that is different.

"Now, a faction fight doesn't resemble this at all, at all. Paddy's at home here—all song, dance, good-humour, and affection. His cheek is flushed with delight, which, indeed, may derive assistance from the consciousness of having no

bayonets or loaded carabines to contend with. But, anyhow, he's at home; his eye is lit with real glee; he tosses his hat in the air, in the height of mirth, and leaps like a mountebank, two yards from the ground. Then with what a gracious dexterity he brandishes his cudgel!—what a joyous spirit is heard in his shout at the face of a friend from another faction! His very 'whoo!' is contagious, and would make a man that had settled on running away, return and join the sport with an appetite truly Irish. He is, in fact, while under the influence of this heavenly *afflatus*, in love with every one—man, woman, and child. If he meet his sweetheart, he will give her a kiss and a hug, and that with double kindness because he is on his way to thrash her father or brother. It is the *acumen* of his enjoyment; and woe be to him who will adventure to go between him and his amusements. To be sure, skulls and bones are broken, and lives lost; but they are lost in pleasant fighting—they are the consequences of the sport, the beauty of which consists in breaking as many heads and necks as you can; and certainly when a man enters into the spirit of any exercise there is nothing like elevating himself to the point of excellence. Then a man ought never to be disheartened. If you lose this game, or get your head good-humourly beaten to pieces, why, you may win another, or your friends may mollify two or three skulls as a set-off to yours—but that is nothing.

"When the evening became more advanced, maybe, considering the poor look-up there was for anything like decent sport—maybe in the early part of the day it wasn't the delightful sight to see the boys on each side of the two great factions beginning to get frolicsome. Maybe the songs and the shouting, when they began, hadn't melody and music in them, anyhow. People may talk about harmony; but what harmony is equal to that in which five or six hundred men sing and shout, and leap and caper at each other, as a prelude to neighbourly fighting, where they beat time upon the drums of each other's ears and heads with oak drum-sticks? That's an Irishman's music; and hard fortune to the *garran* [1] that

[1] Means a horse, but always a spiritless one, and, figuratively, a person of no courage.—ED.

wouldn't have friendship and kindness in him to join and play a stave along with them! 'Whoo! your sowl! Hurroo! Success to our side! Hi for the O'Callaghans! Where's the blackguard to—' I beg pardon, decent reader; I forgot myself for a moment, or rather I got new life in me, for I am nothing at all, at all, for the last five months—a kind of nonentity, I may say, ever since that vagabond Burgess occasioned me to pay a visit to my distant relations, till my friends get that last matter of the collar-bone settled.

"The impulse which faction fighting gives trade and business in Ireland is truly surprising; whereas party fighting depreciates both. As soon as it is perceived that a party fight is to be expected, all buying and selling are suspended for the day, and those who are not up,[1] and even many who are, take themselves and their property home as quickly as may be convenient. But in a faction fight, as soon as there is any perspective of a row, depend upon it, there is quick work at all kinds of negotiation—and truly there is nothing like brevity and decision in buying and selling; for which reason faction fighting, at all events, if only for the sake of national prosperity, should be encouraged and kept up.

"Towards five o'clock, if a man was placed on an exalted station, so that he could look at the crowd, and wasn't able to fight, he could have seen much that a man might envy him for. Here a hat went up, or maybe a dozen of them; then followed a general hurrah. On the other side two dozen *caubeens* sought the sky, like so many scaldy crows attempting their own element for the first time, only they were not so black. Then another shout, which was answered by that of their friends on the opposite side; so that you would hardly know which side hurrahed loudest, the blending of both was so truly symphonious. Now, there was a shout for the face of an O'Callaghan; this was prosecuted on the very heels by another for the face of an O'Hallaghan. Immediately a man of the O'Hallaghan side doffed his tattered frieze, and catching it by the very extremity of the sleeve, drew it, with a tact known only by an initiation of half a dozen street days, up the pavement after him. On the instant a blade from

[1] Initiated into Whiteboyism.

the O'Callaghan side peeled with equal alacrity, and stretching his home-made[1] at full length after him, proceeded triumphantly up the street to meet the other.

"Tundher-an-ages, what's this for, at all, at all I wish I hadn't begun to manuscript an account of it, anyhow; 'tis like a hungry man dreaming of a good dinner at a feast, and afterwards awaking and finding his front ribs and backbone on the point of union. Reader, is that a blackthorn you carry—tut, where is my imagination bound for?—to meet the other, I say.

"'Where's the rascally O'Callaghan that will place his toe or his shillely on this frieze?' 'Is there no blackguard O'Hallaghan jist to look cruked at the coat of an O'Callaghan, or say black's the white of his eye?'

"'Throth and there is, Ned, *avourneen*, that same on the sod here.'

"'Is that Barney?'

"'The same, Ned, *ma bouchal*—and how is your mother's son, Ned?'

"'In good health at the present time, thank God and you. How is yourself, Barney?'

"'Can't complain as time goes; only take this, anyhow, to mend your health, *ma bouchal*'—(*whack*).

"'Success, Barney, and here's at your sarvice, *avick*, not making little of what I got, anyway'—(*crack*).

"About five o'clock on a May evening, in the fair of Knockimdowney, was the ice thus broken, with all possible civility, by Ned and Barney. The next moment a general rush took place towards the scene of action, and ere you could bless yourself, Barney and Ned were both down, weltering in their own and each other's blood. I scarcely know, indeed, though with a mighty respectable quota of experimentality myself, how to describe what followed. For the first twenty minutes the general harmony of this fine row might be set to music, according to a scale something like this: *Whick, whack—crick, crack—whick, whack—crick, crack.* 'Here, yer sowl—(*crack*)—there, yer sowl—(*whack*). Whoo for the O'Hallaghans!'—(*crack, crack, crack*). 'Hurroo for the

[1] Frieze coat, generally made at home.—ED.

O'Callaghans!'—(*whack, whack, whack*). The O'Callaghans for ever!'—(*whack*). 'The O'Hallaghans for ever!'—(*crack*). 'Murther! murther!—(*crick, crack*)—foul! foul!—(*whick, whack*). Blood and turf!—(*whack, whick*)—tundher-an-ouns'—(*crack, crick*). 'Hurroo! my darlings, handle your *kippeens*—(*crack, crack*)—the O'Hallaghans are going!'—(*whack, whack*).

"You are to suppose them here to have been at it for about half an hour.

"(*Whack, crack*)—'Oh—oh—oh! have mercy upon me, boys—(*crack*—a shriek of murther! murther!—*crack, crack, whack*)—my life—my life—(*crack, crack—whack, whack*)—oh! for the sake of the living Father!—for the sake of my wife and childher, Ned Hallaghan, spare my life.'

"'So we will, but take this, anyhow'—(*whack, crack, whack*).

"'Oh! for the love of God, don't kill—(*whack, crack*)—oh!'—(*crack, whack*—dies).

"'Hurrah!' from the O'Hallaghans. 'Bravo, boys! there s one of them done for. Whoo! my darlings—hurroo! the O'Hallaghans for ever!'

"The scene now changes to the O'Callaghan side.

"'Jack—oh, Jack, *avourneen*—hell to their sowls for murdherers—Paddy's killed—his skull's smashed—revinge, boys, Paddy O'Callaghan's killed! On with you, O'Callaghans—on with you—on with you, Paddy O'Callaghan's murdhered—take to the stones—that's it—keep it up—down with him—success—he's the bloody villain that didn't show him marcy—that's it! Tundher-an-ouns, is it laving him that way you are afther?—let me at him!'

"'Here's a stone, Tom!'

"'No, no, this stick has the lead in it—it'll do him, never fear!'

"'Let him alone, Barney, he got enough.'

"'By the powdhers, it's myself that won't; didn't he kill Paddy?—(*crack, crack*). Take that, you murdhering thief!'—(*whack, whack*).

"'Oh!—(*whack, crack*)—my head—I'm killed—I'm——' (*crack—kicks the bucket*).

"'Now, your sowl, that does you, anyway—(*crack, whack*).

Hurroo!—man for man, boys—an O'Hallaghan's done for—whoo for our side!—tol-deroll, lol-deroll, tow, row, row—hurrah!—tol-deroll, lol-deroll, tow, row, row—hurrah for the O'Callaghans!'

"From this moment the battle became delightful—it was now pelt and welt on both sides; but many of the *kippeens* were broken—many of the boys had their fighting arms disabled by a dislocation or bit of fracture, and those weren't equal to more than doing a little upon such as were down.

"In the midst of the din such a dialogue as this might be heard:—

"'Larry, you're after being done for, for this day'—(*whack, crack*).

"'Only an eye gone—is that Mickey?'—(*whick, whack*).

"'That's it, my darlings!—you may say that, Larry—'tis my mother's son that's in it—(*crack, crack*)—hurrah for the O'Hallaghan's! What have you got, Larry?'—(*crack, crack*).

"'Only the bone of my arm, God be praised for it, very purtily snapt across!'—(*whack, whack*).

"'Is that all? Well, some people have luck!'—(*crack, crack*).

"'Why, I've no reason to complain, thank God—(*whack, crack*) — purty play that, anyway — Paddy O'Callaghan's settled—did you hear it?—(*whack, whack*—another shout). That's it, boys—handle the shilleleys! Success, O'Hallaghans—down with the bloody O'Callaghans!'

"'I did hear it; so is Jem O'Hallaghan—(*crack, whack, whack, crack*)—you're not able to get up, I see—tare-an-ounty, isn't it a pleasure to hear that play? What ails you?'

"'Oh, Larry, I'm in great pain, and getting very weak, entirely'—(faints).

"'Faix, and he's settled, too, I'm thinking.'

"'Oh, murdher—my arm!'—(one of the O'Callaghans attacks him—*crack, crack*).

"'Take that, you bagabone!'—(*whack, whack*).

"'Murdher, murdher!—is it striking a down man you're after?—foul, foul, and my arm broke!'—(*crack, crack*).

"'Take that, with what you got before, and it'll ase you, maybe.'

"A party of the O'Hallaghans attack the man who is beating him.

"'Murdher, murdher!'—(*crack, whack, whack, crack, crack, whack*).

"'Lay on him, your sowls to perdition—lay on him, hot and heavy—give it to him! He sthruck me, and me down wid my broken arm!'

"'Foul, ye thieves of the world!—(from the O'Callaghans)—foul!—five against one—give me fair play!—(*crack, crack, crack*)—oh!—(*whack*)—oh, oh, oh!'—(falls senseless, covered with blood).

"'Ha, hell's cure to you, you bloody thief; you didn't spare me, with my arm broke—(another general shout). Bad end to it, isn't it a poor case entirely, that I can't even throw up my *caubeen*, let alone join in the divarsion?'

"Both parties now rallied, and ranged themselves along the street, exhibiting a firm, compact phalanx, wedged close against each other, almost foot to foot. The mass was thick and dense, and the tug of conflict stiff, wild, and savage. Much natural skill and dexterity were displayed in their mutual efforts to preserve their respective ranks unbroken; and as the sallies and charges were made on both sides, the temporary rush, the indentation of the multitudinous body, and the rebound into its original position, gave an undulating appearance to the compact mass—reeking, groaning, dragging, and huzzaing—as it was, that resembled the serpentine motion of a rushing waterspout in the cloud.

"The women now began to take part with their brothers and sweethearts. Those who had no bachelors among the opposite factions fought along with their brothers; others did not scruple even to assist in giving their enamoured swains the father of a good beating. Many, however, were more faithful to love than to natural affection, and these sallied out like heroines, under the banners of their sweethearts, fighting with amazing prowess against their friends and relations; nor was it at all extraordinary to see two sisters engaged on opposite sides—perhaps tearing each other, as, with dishevelled hair, they screamed with a fury that was truly exemplary. Indeed, it is no untruth to assert that the women do much valuable execution. Their manner of fighting is

this—as soon as the fair one decides upon taking a part in the row, she instantly takes off her apron or her stocking, stoops down, and lifting the first four-pounder she can get, puts it in the corner of her apron, or the foot of her stocking, if it has a foot, and marching into the scene of action, lays about her right and left. Upon my credibility, they are extremely useful and handy, and can give mighty nate knock-downs, inasmuch as no guard that a man is acquainted with can ward off their blows. Nay, what is more, it often happens, when a son-in-law is in a faction against his father-in-law and his wife's people generally, that if he and his wife's brother meet, the wife will clink him with the pot in her apron, downing her own husband with great skill, for it is not always that marriage extinguishes the hatred of factions; and very often 'tis the brother that is humiliated.

"Up to the death of these two men, John O'Callaghan and Rose's father, together with a large party of their friends on both sides, were drinking in a public-house, determined to take no portion in the fight at all, at all. Poor Rose, when she heard the shouting and terrible strokes, got as pale as death, and sat close to John, whose hand she captured in hers, beseeching him, and looking up in his face with the most imploring sincerity as she spoke, not to go out among them; the tears falling all the time from her fine eyes, the mellow flashes of which, when John's pleasantry in soothing her would seduce a smile, went into his very heart. But when, on looking out of the window where they sat, two of the opposing factions heard that a man on each side was killed; and when, on ascertaining the names of the individuals and of those who murdered them, it turned out that one of the murdered men was brother to a person in the room, and his murderer uncle to one of those in the window, it was not in the power of man or woman to keep them asunder, particularly as they were all rather advanced in liquor. In an instant the friends of the murdered man made a rush to the window before any pacifiers had time to get between them, and catching the nephew of him who had committed the murder, hurled him head-foremost upon the stone pavement, where his skull was dashed to pieces, and his brains scattered about the flags!

"A general attack instantly took place in the room between the two factions; but the apartment was too low and crowded to permit of proper fighting, so they rushed out to the street, shouting and yelling, as they do when the battle comes to the real point of doing business. As soon as it was seen that the heads of the O'Callaghans and O'Hallaghans were at work as well as the rest, the fight was recommenced with retrebled spirit; but when the mutilated body of the man who had been flung from the window was observed lying in a pool of his own proper brains and blood, such a cry arose among his friends as would cake [1] the vital fluid in the veins of any one not a party in the quarrel. Now was the work—the moment of interest—men and women groaning, staggering, and lying insensible; others shouting, leaping, and huzzaing; some singing, and not a few able-bodied *spalpeens* blurting, like overgrown children, on seeing their own blood; many raging and roaring about like bulls;—all this formed such a group as a faction fight, and nothing else, could represent.

"The battle now blazed out afresh; all kinds of instruments were now pressed into the service. Some got flails, some spades, some shovels, and one man got his hands upon a scythe, with which, unquestionably, he would have taken more lives than one; but, very fortunately, as he sallied out to join the crowd, he was politely visited in the back of the head by a brickbat, which had a mighty convincing way with it of giving him a peaceable disposition, for he instantly lay down, and did not seem at all anxious as to the result of the battle. The O'Hallaghans were now compelled to give way, owing principally to the introvention of John O'Callaghan, who, although he was as good as sworn to take no part in the contest, was compelled to fight merely to protect himself. But, blood-and-turf! when he did begin he was dreadful. As soon as his party saw him engaged, they took fresh courage, and in a short time made the O'Hallaghans retreat up the churchyard. I never saw anything equal to John; he absolutely sent them down in dozens; and when a man would give him any inconvenience with the stick, he

would down him with the fist, for right and left were all alike to him. Poor Rose's brother and he met, both roused like two lions; but when John saw who it was, he held back his hand.

"'No, Tom,' says he, 'I'll not strike you, for Rose's sake. I'm not fighting through ill-will to you or your family; so take another direction, for I can't strike you.'

"The blood, however, was unfortunately up in Tom.

"'We'll decide it now,' said he. 'I'm as good a man as you, O'Callaghan; and let me whisper this in your ear—you'll never warm the one bed with Rose, while God's in heaven—it's past that now—there can be nothing but blood between us!'

"At this juncture two of the O'Callaghans ran with their *shillelaghs* up, to beat down Tom on the spot.

"'Stop, boys!' said John; 'you mustn't touch him; he had no hand in the quarrel. Go, boys, if you respect me; lave him to myself.'

"The boys withdrew to another part of the fight; and the next instant Tom struck the very man that interfered to save him across the temple, and cut him severely. John put his hand up, and staggered.

"'I'm sorry for this,' he observed; 'but it's now self-defence with me,' and at the same moment, with one blow, he left Tom O'Hallaghan stretched insensible on the street.

"On the O'Hallaghans being driven to the churchyard, they were at a mighty great inconvenience for weapons. Most of them had lost their sticks, it being a usage in fights of this kind to twist the cudgels from the grasp of the beaten men, to prevent them from rallying. They soon, however, furnished themselves with the best they could find, *videlicet*, the skull, leg, thigh and arm bones which they found lying about the graveyard. This was a new species of weapon, for which the majority of the O'Callaghans were scarcely prepared. Out they sallied in a body, some with these, others with stones, and making fierce assault upon their enemies, absolutely druv them back, not so much by the damage they were doing, as by the alarm and terror which these unexpected species of missiles excited.

"At this moment, notwithstanding the fatality that had

taken place, nothing could be more truly comical and facetious than the appearance of the field of battle. Skulls were flying in every direction—so thick, indeed, that it might with truth be asseverated that many who were petrified in the dust had their skulls broken in this great battle between the factions. God help poor Ireland! when its inhabitants are so pugnacious that even the grave is no security against getting their crowns cracked and their bones fractured! Well, anyhow, skulls and bones flew in every direction; stones and brickbats were also put in motion; spades, shovels, loaded whips, pot-sticks, churn-staffs, flails, and all kinds of available weapons were in hot employment.

"But perhaps there was nothing more truly felicitous or original in its way than the mode of warfare adopted by little Neal Malone, who was tailor for the O'Callaghan side; for every tradesman is obliged to fight on behalf of his own faction. Big Frank Farrell, the miller, being on the O'Hallaghan side, had been sent for, and came up from his mill behind the town, quite fresh. He was never what could be called a good man,[1] though it was said that he could lift ten hundredweight. He puffed forward with a great cudgel, determined to commit slaughter out of the face, and the first man he met was the *weeshy* fraction of a tailor, as nimble as a hare. He immediately attacked him, and would probably have taken his measure for life, had not the tailor's activity protected him. Farrell was in a rage; and Neal, taking advantage of his blind fury, slipt round him, and, with a short run, sprang upon the miller's back, and planted a foot upon the threshold of each coat-pocket, holding on by the mealy collar of his waistcoat. In this position he belaboured the miller's face and eyes with his little hard fist to such purpose that he had him in the course of a few minutes nearly as blind as a mill-horse. The miller roared for assistance, but the pell-mell was going on too warmly for his cries to be available. In fact, he resembled an elephant with a monkey on his back.

"'How do you like that, Farrell?' Neal would say, giving him a cuff; 'and that, and that?—but that is best of all.

[1] A brave man.

Take it again, gudgeon—(two cuffs more)—here's grist for you—(half a dozen additional)—hard fortune to you !—(*crack, crack*). What ! going to lie down !—by all that's terrible, if you do, I'll annigulate[1] *you*. Here's a *dhuragh*[2]—(another half-dozen)—long measure, you savage—the baker's dozen, you baste — there's five an' twenty to the score, Samson, and one or two in'—(*crack, whack*).

"'Oh ! murther *sheery !*' shouted the miller—'murther-an-age, I'm kilt—foul play—foul play !'

"'You lie, big Nebuchodonosor ; it's not—this is all fair play, you big baste — fair play, Samson ; by the same a-token, here's to jog your memory that it's the Fair day of Knockimdowney—Irish Fair play, you whale—but I'll whale you'—(*crack, crack, whack*).

"'Oh—oh !' shouted the miller.

"'Oh—oh ! is it ! Oh, if I had my scissors here till I'd clip your ears off, wouldn't I be the happy man, anyhow, you swab, you'—(*whack, whack, crack*).

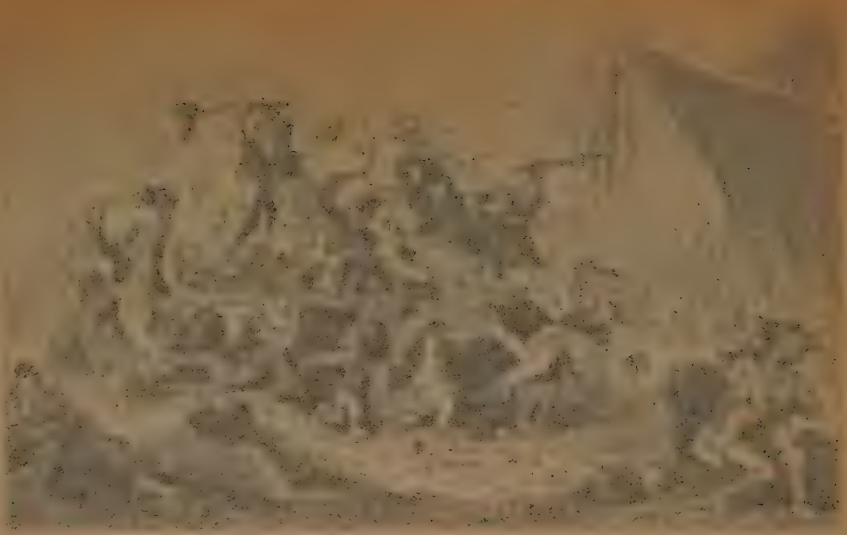
"Murther—murther—murther !' shouted the miller—'is there no help ?'

"'Help, is it ?—you may say that—(*crack, crack*)—there's a trifle—a small taste in the milling style, you know ; and here goes to dislodge a grinder. Did ye ever hear of the tailor on horseback, Samson—eh ?—(*whack, whack*)—did you ever expect to see a tailor o' horseback of yourself, you baste—(*crack*). I tell you, if you offer to lie down, I'll annigulate you out o' the face.'

"Never, indeed, was a miller before or since so well dusted; and I daresay Neal would have rode him long enough, but for an O'Hallaghan who had gone into one of the houses to procure a weapon. This man was nearly as original in his choice of one as the tailor in the position which he selected for beat-

[1] Annihilate. Many of the jawbreakers—and this was certainly such in a double sense—used by the hedge schoolmasters are scattered among the people, by whom they are so twisted that it would be extremely difficult to recognise them.

[2] *Dhuragh*—an additional portion of anything thrown in from a spirit of generosity, after the measure agreed on is given. When the miller, for instance, receives his toll, the country people usually throw in several handfuls of meal as a *dhuragh*.



you do, I'll annigulate[1] *you*. Here's a *dh*[illegible]

and one or two in'—(*crack, whack*).

age, I'm kilt—foul play—foul play!'

you'—(*crack, crack, whack*).

"'Oh—oh!' shouted the miller.

swab, you!—(*whack, whack, crack*).

there no help?'

the face.'

extremely difficult to recognise them.

several handfuls of meal as a *dhuragh*.

ing the miller. On entering the kitchen, he found that he had been anticipated; there was neither tongs, poker, or churn-staff, nor, in fact, anything wherewith he could assault his enemies—all had been carried off by others. There was, however, a goose in the action of being roasted on a spit at the fire. This was enough—honest O'Hallaghan saw nothing but the spit, which he accordingly seized, goose and all, making the best of his way, so armed, to the scene of battle. He just came out as the miller was once more roaring for assistance, and, to a dead certainty, would have spitted the tailor like a cock-sparrow against the miller's carcase had not his activity once more saved him. Unluckily, the unfortunate miller got the thrust behind, which was intended for Neal, and roared like a bull. He was beginning to shout 'foul play,' when on turning round he perceived that the thrust was not intended for him but for the tailor.

"'Give me that spit,' said he; 'by all the mills that ever were turned, I'll spit the tailor this blessed minute beside the goose, and we'll roast them both together.'

"The other refused to part with the spit; but the miller, seizing the goose, flung it with all his force after the tailor, who stooped, however, and avoided the blow.

"'No man has a better right to the goose than the tailor,' said Neal, as he took it up, and disappearing, neither he nor the goose could be seen for the remainder of the day.

"The battle was now somewhat abated. Skulls, and bones, and bricks, and stones were, however, still flying; so that it might be truly said, the bones of contention were numerous. The streets presented a woeful spectacle: men were lying with their bones broken; others, though not so seriously injured, lappered in their blood; some were crawling up, but were instantly knocked down by their enemies; some were leaning against the walls, or groping their way silently along them, endeavouring to escape observation, lest they might be smashed down and altogether murdered. Wives were sitting with the bloody heads of their husbands in their laps, tearing their hair, weeping, and cursing, in all the gall of wrath, those who left them in such a state. Daughters performed the same offices to their fathers, and sisters to their brothers; not pretermitting those who did

not neglect their broken-pated bachelors, to whom they paid equal attention. Yet was the scene not without abundance of mirth. Many a hat was thrown up by the O'Callaghan side, who certainly gained the day. Many a song was raised by those who tottered about with trickling sconces, half drunk with whisky, and half stupid with beating. Many a 'whoo,' and 'hurroo,' and 'hurra' was sent forth by the triumphanters; but truth to tell, they were miserably feeble and faint compared to what they had been in the beginning of the amusements—sufficiently evincing that, although they might boast of the name of victory, they had got a bellyful of beating. Still there was hard fighting.

"I mentioned some time ago that a man had adopted a scythe. I wish from my heart there had been no such bloody instrument there that day; but truth must be told. John O'Callaghan was now engaged against a set of the other O's, who had rallied for the third time and attacked him and his party. Another brother of Rose *Galh's* was in this engagement, and him did John O'Callaghan not only knock down, but cut desperately across the temple. A man, stripped, and covered with blood and dust, at that moment made his appearance, his hand bearing the blade of the aforesaid scythe. His approach was at once furious and rapid—and, I may as well add, fatal; for before John O'Callaghan had time to be forewarned of his danger, he was cut down, the artery of his neck laid open, and he died without a groan. It was truly dreadful, even to the oldest fighter present, to see the strong rush of red blood that curvated about his neck, until it gurgled, gurgled, gurgled, and lappered, and bubbled out—ending in small red spouts, blackening and blackening as they became fainter and more faint. At this criticality every eye was turned from the corpse to the murderer; but he had been instantly struck down, and a female, with a large stone in her apron, stood over him, her arms stretched out, her face horribly distorted with agony, and her eyes turned backwards, as it were, into her head. In a few seconds she fell into strong convulsions, and was immediately taken away. Alas! alas! it was Rose *Galh;* and when we looked at the man she had struck down, he was found to be her brother—flesh of her flesh, and blood

by those who tottered about with trickling s

bloody instrument there that day;

of her blood! On examining him more closely, we discovered that his under-jaw hung loose, that his limbs were supple. We tried to make him speak, but in vain—he, too, was a corpse.

"The fact was, that in consequence of his being stripped, and covered by so much blood and dust, she knew him not; and impelled by her feelings to avenge herself on the murderer of her lover, to whom she doubly owed her life, she struck him a deadly blow, without knowing him to be her brother. The shock produced by seeing her lover murdered, and the horror of finding that she herself, in avenging him, had taken her brother's life, was too much for a heart so tender as hers. On recovering from her convulsions, her senses were found to be gone for ever! Poor girl! she is still living; but from that moment to this she has never opened her lips to mortal. She is indeed a fair ruin, but silent, melancholy, and beautiful as the moon in the summer heaven. Poor Rose *Galh!* you, and many a mother, and father, and wife, and orphan have had reason to malediet the bloody Battles of the Factions.

"With regard to my grandfather, he says that he didn't see purtier fighting within his own memory, nor since the fight between himself and Big Mucklemurray took place in the same town. But to do him justice, he condemns the scythe and every other weapon except the cudgel; because, he says, that if they continue to be resorted to, nate fighting will be altogether forgotten in the country."

THE MIDNIGHT MASS

FRANK M'KENNA was a snug farmer, frugal and industrious in his habits, and, what is rare amongst most men of his class, addicted to neither drink nor quarrelling. He lived at the skirt of a mountain, which ran up in long successive undulations until it ended in a dark, abrupt peak, very perpendicular on one side, and always, except on a bright day, capped with clouds. Before his door lay a hard plain, covered only with a kind of bent, and studded with round grey rocks protruding somewhat above its surface. Through this plain, over a craggy channel, ran a mountain torrent, that issued, to the right of M'Kenna's house, from a rocky and precipitous valley, which twisted itself round the base of the mountain until it reached the perpendicular side, where the peak actually overhung it. On looking either from the bottom of the valley or the top of the peak, the depth appeared immense; and on a summer's day, when the blackthorns and other hardy shrubs that in some places clothed its rocky sides were green, to view the river sparkling below you in the sun, as it flung itself over two or three cataracts of great depth and boldness, filled the mind with those undefinable sensations of pleasure inseparable from a contemplation of the sublimities of nature. Nor did it possess less interest when beheld in the winter storm. Well do we remember, though then ignorant of our own motives, when we have, in the turmoil of the elements, climbed its steep, shaggy sides, disappearing like a speck, or something not of earth, among the dark clouds that rolled over its summit, for no other purpose than to stand upon its brow and look down on the red torrent dashing with impetuosity from crag to crag, whilst the winds roared, and the clouds flew in dark columns around us, giving to the natural wildness of the place an air of wilder desolation. Beyond this glen the mountains stretched away for eight or ten miles in swelling masses, between which lay

many extensive sweeps, well sheltered, and abundantly stocked with game, particularly with hares and grouse. M'Kenna's house stood, as I said, at the foot of this mountain, just where the yellow surface of the plain began to darken into the deeper hues of the heath; to the left lay a considerable tract of stony land in a state of cultivation; and beyond the river, exactly opposite the house, rose a long line of hills, studded with houses, and in summer diversified with fallow, pasture, and corn fields, the beauty of which was heightened by the columns of smoke that slanted across the hills as the breeze carried them through the lucid haze of the atmosphere.

M'Kenna's family consisted of himself, his wife, two daughters, and two sons. One of these was a young man addicted to drink, idle, ill-tempered, and disobedient; seldom taking a part in the labours of the family, but altogether devoted to field sports, fairs, markets, and dances. In many parts of Ireland it is usual to play at cards for mutton, loaves, fowls, or whisky, and he was seldom absent from such gambling parties if held within a reasonable distance. Often had the other members of the family remonstrated with him on his idle and immoral courses; but their remonstrances only excited his bad passions, and produced, on his part, angry and exasperating language, or open determinations to abandon the family altogether and enlist. For some years he went on in this way, a hardened, ungodly profligate, spurning the voice of reproof and of conscience, and insensible to the entreaties of domestic affection or the commands of parental authority. Such was his state of mind and mode of life when our story opens.

At the time in which the incidents contained in this sketch took place, the peasantry of Ireland, being less encumbered with heavy rents, and more buoyant in spirits than the decay of national prosperity has of late permitted them to be, indulged more frequently and to a greater stretch in those rural sports and festivities so suitable to their natural love of humour and amusement. Dances, wakes, and weddings were then held according to the most extravagant forms of ancient usage; the people were easier in their circumstances, and consequently indulged in them with lighter hearts and a stronger relish for enjoyment. When any of the great

festivals of their religion approached, the popular mind, unrepressed by poverty and national dissension, gradually elevated itself to a species of wild and reckless mirth, productive of incidents irresistibly ludicrous and remarkably characteristic of Irish manners. It is not, however, to be expected that a people whose love of fighting is so innate a principle in their disposition should celebrate these festive seasons without an occasional crime, which threw its deep shadow over the mirthful character of their customs. Many such occurred; but they were looked upon then with a degree of horror and detestation of which we can form but a very inadequate idea at present.

It was upon the advent of one of those festivals—Christmas —that the family of M'Kenna, like every other family in the neighbourhood, were making preparations to celebrate it with the usual hilarity. They cleared out their barn in order to have a dance on Christmas Eve, and for this purpose the two sons and the servant man wrought with that kind of industry produced by the cheerful prospect of some happy event. For a week or fortnight before the evening on which the dance was appointed to be held, due notice of it had been given to the neighbours, and of course there was no doubt but that it would be numerously attended.

Christmas Eve, as the day preceding Christmas is called, has been always a day of great preparation and bustle. Indeed, the whole week previous to it is also remarkable, as exhibiting the importance attached by the people to those occasions on which they can give loose to their love of fun and frolic. The farmhouse undergoes a thorough cleansing. Father and sons are, or rather used to be, all engaged in repairing the outhouses, patching them with thatch where it was wanted, mending mangers, paving stable floors, fixing cow-stakes, making *boraghs*,[1] removing nuisances, and cleaning streets.

On the other hand, the mothers, daughters, and maids were also engaged in their several departments—the latter scouring the furniture with sand; the mother making culinary preparations, baking bread, killing fowls, or salting meat;

[1] The rope with which a cow is tied in the cow-house.

whilst the daughters were unusually intent upon the decoration of their own dress, and the making up of the family linen. All, however, was performed with an air of gaiety and pleasure; the ivy and holly were disposed about the dressers and collar beams with great glee; the chimneys were swept amidst songs and laughter; many bad voices, and some good ones, were put in requisition; whilst several who had never been known to chant a stave, alarmed the listeners by the grotesque and incomprehensible nature of their melody. Those who were inclined to devotion—and there is no lack of it in Ireland—took to carols and hymns, which they sang, for want of better airs, to tunes highly comic. We have ourselves often heard the Doxology sung in Irish verse to the facetious air of "Paudeen O'Rafferty," and other hymns to the tune of "Peas upon a Trencher" and "Cruiskeen Lawn." Sometimes, on the contrary, many of them, from the very fulness of jollity, would become pathetic, and indulge in those touching old airs of their country which may be truly called songs of sorrow, from the exquisite and simple pathos with which they abound. This, though it may seem anomalous, is but natural; for there is nothing so apt to recall to the heart those friends, whether absent or dead, with whom it has been connected, as a stated festival. Affection is then awakened, and summons to the hearth where it presides those on whose faces it loves to look. If they be living, it places them in the circle of happiness which surrounds it; and if they be removed for ever from such scenes, their memory, which, amidst the din of ordinary life, has almost passed away, is now restored, and their loss felt as if it had been only just then sustained.

For this reason, at such times it is not at all unusual to see the elders of Irish families touched by pathos as well as humour. The Irish are a people whose affections are as strong as their imaginations are vivid; and, in illustration of this, we may add that many a time have we seen them raised to mirth and melted into tears, almost at the same time, by a song of the most comic character. The mirth, however, was for the song, and the sorrow for the memory of some beloved relation who had been remarkable for singing it or with whom it had been a favourite.

We do not affirm that in the family of the M'Kennas there were, upon the occasion which we are describing, any tears shed. The enjoyments of the season, and the humours of the expected dance, both combined to give them a more than usual degree of mirth and frolic. At an early hour all that was necessary for the due celebration of that night and the succeeding day had been arranged and completed. The whisky had been laid in, the Christmas candles bought, the barn cleared out, the seats laid—in short, everything in its place, and a place for everything. About one o'clock, however, the young members of the family began to betray some symptoms of uneasiness; nor was M'Kenna himself, though the *farithee,* or man of the house, altogether so exempt from what they felt as might, if the cause of it were known to our readers, be expected from a man of his years and experience.

From time to time one of the girls tripped out as far as the stile before the door, where she stood looking in a particular direction until her sight was fatigued.

"Och, och!" her mother exclaimed during her absence, "but that *colleen's* sick about Barny; *musha,* but it would be the beautiful joke, all out, if he'd disappoint the whole of yees. Faix, it wouldn't be unlike the same man to go to wherever he can make most money—and, sure, small blame to him for that; what's one place to him more than another?"

"Hut!" M'Kenna replied, rising, however, to go out himself, "the *girsha's* makin' a *bauliore* of herself."

"An' where's yourself slippin' out to?" rejoined his wife, with a wink of shrewd humour at the rest. "I say, Frank, are you goin' to look for him too? *Mavrone,* but that's sinsible! Why, thin, you snakin' ould rogue, is that the way wid you? Throth, I have often hard it said that 'one fool makes many;' but sure enough, 'an ould fool's worse nor any.' Come in here this minute, I say—walk back—you to have your horn up—faix, indeed!"

"Why, I am only goin' to get the small phaties boiled for the pigs, poor crathurs, for their Christmas dinner. Sure, we oughtn't to neglect thim no more than ourselves, the crathurs, that can't spake their wants except by gruntin'."

"Saints above!—the Lord forgive me for bringin' down their names upon a Christmas Eve!—but it's beside himself

the man is—an' him knows that the phaties wor boiled an' made up in balls for them airly this mornin'!"

In the meantime the wife's good-natured attack upon her husband produced considerable mirth in the family. In consequence of what she said, he hesitated; but ultimately was proceeding towards the door, when the daughter returned, her brow flushed, and her eye sparkling with mirth and delight.

"Ha!" said the father, with a complacent smile, "all's right, Peggy; you seen him, *alanna.* The music's in your eye, *acushla,* an' the feet of you can't keep themselves off o' the ground; an' all bekase you seen Barny *Dhal* pokin' acrass the fields, wid his head up, an' his skirt stickin' out behind him wid *Granua Waile.*"[1]

The father had conjectured properly, for the joy which animated the girl's countenance could not be misunderstood.

"Barny's comin'," she exclaimed, clapping her hands with great glee, "an' our Frank wid him; they're at the river, an' Frank has him on his back, and *Granua Waile* undher his arm! Come out, come out! You'll die for good, lookin' at them staggerin' acrass. I knew he'd come! I knew it! God be good to thim that invinted Christmas; it's a brave time, faix!"

In a moment the inmates were grouped before the door, all anxious to catch a glimpse of Barny and *Granua Waile.*

"Faix, ay!" "Sure enough!" "Sarra doubt of it!" "Whethen, I'd never mistrust Barny!" might be heard in distinct exclamations from each.

"Faith, he's a Trojan," said the *farithee,* "an' must get lashins of the best we have. Come in, childher, an' red the hob for him.

'Och, Christmas comes but wanst a year,
An' Christmas comes but wanst a year;
An' the divil a mouth
Shall be friends wid drouth,
While I have whisky, ale, or beer.

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[1] Meaning his fiddle. It is one of the many names by which Ireland itself is designated in bardic effusions, and is used in many of the country ballads of the present day. Granua Waile (or properly, Grainne Maol) was Grace O'Malley, a famous Irish chieftainess in Queen Elizabeth's time.—ED.

'Och, Christmas comes but wanst a year,
An' Christmas comes but wanst a year;
Wid han' in han',
An' can to can,
Then hi for the whisky, ale, an' beer.

'Och, Christmas comes but wanst a year,
An' Christmas comes but wanst a year;
Then the high an' the low
Shall shake their toe
When prim'd wid whisky, ale, an' beer.'

For all that, the sorra fig I care for either ale or beer, barrin' in regard of mere drouth; give me the whisky. Eh, Alley, won't we have a jorum, anyhow?"

"Why, thin," replied the wife, "the divil be from me (the crass about us for namin' him), but you're a greater *Brine-oge* than some of your childher! I suppose it's your capers Frank has in him. Will you behave yourself, you ould slingpoke? Behave, I say, an' let me go. Childher, will you help me to flake this man out o' the place? Look at him here, caperin' an' crackin' his fingers afore me, an' pullin' me out to dance!"

"Och, och, murdher alive!" exclaimed the good man, out of breath. "I seen the day, anyway—an' maybe could show a step or two yet if I was well vexed. You can't forget ould times, Alley? Eh, you thief?"

"*Musha*, have sinse, man alive," replied the wife, in a tone of placid gravity, which only betrayed the pleasure she herself felt in his happiness. "Have sinse, an' the strange man comin' in, an' don't let him see you in such figaries."

The observation of the good woman produced a loud laugh among them. "*Arrah*, what are yees laughin' at?" she inquired.

"Why, mother," said one of her daughters, "how could Barny *Dhal*, a blind man, see anybody?"

Alley herself laughed at her blunder, but wittily replied, "Faith, *avourneen*, maybe he can often see as nately through his ear as you can do wid your eyes open; sure, they say he can hear the grass growin'."

"For that matther," observed the *farithee*, joining in the joke, "he can see as far as any of us—whin we're asleep."

The conversation was thus proceeding when Barny *Dahl* and young Frank M'Kenna entered the kitchen.

In a moment all hands were extended to welcome Barny: "*Millia failte ghud,* Barny!" "*Cead millia failte ghud,* Barny!" "Oh, Barny, did you come at last?" "You're welcome, Barny!" "Barny, my Trojan, how is every cart-load of you?" "How is *Granua Waile,* Barny?"

"Why, thin, holy music, did you never see Barny *Dhal* afore? Clear off from about me, or, by the sweets of rosin, I'll play the divil an' break things. 'You're welcome, Barny!' an' 'How are you, Barny?' Why, thin, piper o' Moses, don't I know I'm welcome, an' yit you must be tellin' me what everybody knows! But sure I have great news for you all!"

"What is that, Barny?"

"Well, but can yees keep a sacret?—can yees, girls?"

"Faix can we, Barny, *achora.*"

"Well, so can I—ha, ha, ha! Now are yees sarved? Come, let me to the hob."

"Here, Barny; I'll lead you, Barny."

"No, I have him—come, Barny, I'll lead you; here, *achora,* this is the spot—that's it. Why, Barny," said the arch girl, as she placed him in the corner, "sorra one o' the hob but knows you; it never stirs—ha, ha, ha!"

"Throth, *a colleen,* that tongue o' yours will delude some one afore long, if it hasn't done so already."

"But how is *Granua Waile,* Barny?"

"Poor *Granua* is it? Faith, times is hard wid her often. '*Granua,*' says I to her, 'what do you say, *acushla?*—we're axed to go to two or three places to-day—what do you say? Do you lead, an' I'll follow; your will is my pleasure.' 'An' where are we axed to?' says *Granua,* sinsible enough. 'Why,' says I, 'to Paddy Lanigan's, to Mike Hartigan's, to Jack Lynch's, an', at the heel o' the hunt, to Frank M'Kenna's of the Mountain Bar.' 'By my song,' says she, 'you may go where you plase; for me, I'm off to Frank M'Kenna's, one of the dacentest men in Europe, an' his wife the same. Divil a toe I'll set a-waggin' in any other place this night,' says she, 'for 'tis there we're both well thrated wid the best the house can afford. So,' says she, 'in the

name of all that's musical, you're welcome to the poker an tongs anywhere else; for me, I'm off to Frank's.' An' faith sure enough, she took to her pumps; an' it was only comin' over the hill there that young Frank an' I overtuck her—divil a lie in it."

In fact, Barny, besides being a fiddler, was a *shanahus* of the first water; could tell a story or trace a genealogy as well as any man living, and draw the long bow in either capacity much better than he could in the practice of his more legitimate profession.

"Well, here she is, Barny, to the fore," said the aforesaid arch girl, "an' now give us a tune."

"What!" replied the *farithee*, "is it widout either aitin' or dhrinkin'? Why, the *girsha's* beside herself! Alley, *aroon*, get him the linin',[1] and a sup to tighten his elbow."

The good woman instantly went to provide refreshments for the musician.

"Come, girls," said Barny, "will yees get me a scythe or a handsaw?"

"A scythe or a handsaw—ethen what to do, Barny?"

"Why, to pare my nail, to be sure," replied Barny, with a loud laugh; "but stay—come back here—I'll make shift to do wid a pair of scissors this bout.

'The paarent finds his sons,
The tutherer whips them;
The nailer makes his nails,
The fiddler clips them.'"

Wherever Barny came there was mirth and a disposition to be pleased, so that his jokes always told.

"*Musha*, the sorra pare you, Barny," said one of the girls, "but there's no bein' up to you, good or bad."

"The sorra pair me, is it? Faix, Nancy, you'll soon be paired yourself wid some one, *avourneen*. Do you know a sartin young man wid a nose on him runnin' to a point like the pin of a sun-dial, his knees breakin' the king's pace, strikin' one another ever since he was able to walk, an' that was about four years afther he could say his *Pather Nosther?* an'

[1] That is, food and drink.

faith, whatever you may think, there's no makin' them paceable except by puttin' between them! The wrong side of his shin, too, is foremost; an' though the one-half of his two feet is all heels, he keeps the same heels for set days an' bonfire nights, an' savinly walks on his ankles. His leg, too, Nancy, is stuck in the middle of his foot, like a poker in a pickaxe; an', along wid all——"

"Here, Barny, thry your hand at this," said the good woman, who had not heard his ludicrous description of her fictitious son-in-law—"*eeh arran agus bee laudher*, Barny, ate bread an' be strong. I'll warrant when you begin to play they'll give you little time to do anything but scrape away. Taste the dhrink first, anyway, in the name o' God," and she filled him a glass.

"Augh, augh! faith, you're the moral [1] of a woman. Are you there, M'Kenna?—here's a sudden disholution to your family! May they be scattered wid all speed—manin' the girls—to all corners o' the parish!—ha, ha, ha! Well, that won't vex them, anyhow; an' next, here's a merry Chris'mas to us, an' many o' them! Whooh! blur-an-age! whooh! oh, by gorra!—that's—that's—Frank, run afther my breath—I've lost it—run, you tory [2]—oh, by gor, that's stuff as sthrong as Samson, so it is. Arrah, what well do you dhraw that from? for, faith, 'twould be mighty convanient to live near it in a hard frost."

Barny was now silent for some time, which silence was produced by the industry he displayed in assailing the substantial refreshments before him. When he had concluded his repast he once more tasted the liquor, after which he got *Granua Waile*, and continued playing their favourite tunes, and amusing them with anecdotes, both true and false, until the hour drew nigh when his services were expected by the young men and maidens who had assembled to dance in the barn. Occasionally, however, they took a preliminary step, in which they were joined by a few of their neighbours. Old Frank himself felt his spirits elevated by contemplating the happiness of his children and their young associates.

[1] Model.

[2] It is curious that the words Whig and Tory have each an Irish origin. Tory is an Irish word meaning an outlaw or wanderer.—ED.

"Frank," said he, to the youngest of his sons, "go down to Owen Reillaghan's, and tell him an' his family to come up to the dance early in the evenin'. Owen's a pleasant man," he added, "and a good neighbour, but a small thought too strict in his duties. Tell him to come up, Frank, airly I say; he'll have time enough to go to the Midnight Mass afther dancin' the 'Rakes of Ballyshanny' and the 'Baltihorum Jig'; an' maybe he can't do both in style."

"Ay," said Frank, in his jeering manner, "he carries a handy heel at the dancin' and a supple tongue at the prayin'; but let him alone for bringin' the bottom of his glass and his eyebrow acquainted. But if he'd pray less——"

"Go along, *a veehonee*, an' bring him up," replied the father—"you to talk about prayin'! Them that ud catch you at a prayer ought to be showed for the world to wonder at: a man wid two heads an him would be a fool to him. Go along, I say, and do what you're bid."

"I'm goin'," said Frank, "I'm off; but what if he doesn't come? I'll then have my journey for nothin'."

"An' it's good payment for any journey ever you'll make, barrin' it's to the gallows," replied the father, provoked at his reluctance in obeying him. "Won't you have dancin' enough in the coorse o' the night, for you'll not go to the Midnight Mass, and why don't you be off wid you at wanst?"

Frank shrugged his shoulders two or three times, being loth to leave the music and dancing; but on seeing his father about to address him in sharper language, he went out with a frown on his brows and a half-smothered imprecation bursting from his lips.

He had not proceeded more than a few yards from the door when he met Rody Teague, his father's servant, on his way to the kitchen. "Rody," said he, "isn't this a purty business? my father wantin' to send me down to Owen Reillaghan's; when, by the vartue o' my oath, I'd as soon go half-way into hell as to any place where his son, Mike Reillaghan, ud be. How will I manage, Rody?"

"Why," replied Rody, "as to meetin' wid Mike, take my advice and avoid him. And what is more, I'd give up Peggy Gartland for good. Isn't it a mane thing for you, Frank, to

be hangin' afther a girl that's fonder of another than she is of yourself. By this and by that, I'd no more do it—*awouh!* catch me at it—I'd have spunk in me."

Frank's brow darkened as Rody spoke; instead of instantly replying, he was silent, and appeared to be debating some point in his own mind on which he had not come to a determination.

"My father didn't hear of the fight between Mike and me?" said he interrogatively—"do you think he did, Rody?"

"Not to my knowledge," replied the servant; "if he did, he wouldn't surely send you down. But talking of the fight, you are known to be a stout, well-fought boy—no doubt of that—still, I say, you'd no right to provoke Mike as you did, who, it's well known, could bate any two men in the parish; and so, sign's on it, you got yourself dacently trounced about a girl that doesn't love a bone in your skin."

"He disgraced me, Rody," observed Frank; "I can't rise my head; and you know I was thought by all the parish as good a man as him. No, I wouldn't this blessed Christmas Eve above us, for all that ever my name is worth, be disgraced by him as I am. But—hould, man—have patience!"

"Throth, and, Frank, that's what you never had," said Rody; "and as to bein' disgraced, you disgraced yourself. What right had you to challenge the boy to fight, and to strike him into the bargain, bekase Peggy Gartland danced wid him and wouldn't go out wid you? Death alive, sure that wasn't his fault."

Every word of reproof which proceeded from Rody's lips but strengthened Frank's rage and added to his sense of shame; he looked first in the direction of Reillaghan's house, and immediately towards the little village in which Peggy Gartland lived.

"Rody," said he, slapping him fiercely on the shoulder, "go in—I've—I've made up my mind upon what I'll do—go in, Rody, and get your dinner; but don't be out of the way when I come back."

"And what have you made up your mind to?" inquired Rody.

"Why, be the Sacred Mother o' Heaven, Rody, to—to—be friends wid Mike."

"Ay, there's sinse and rason in that," replied Rody; "and if you'd take my advice you'd give up Peggy Gartland too."

"I'll see you when I come back, Rody; don't be from about the place."

And as he spoke, a single spring brought him over the stile at which they held the foregoing conversation.

On advancing he found himself in one of his father's fields under the shelter of an elder hedge. Here he paused, and seemed still somewhat uncertain as to the direction in which he should proceed. At length he decided; the way towards Peggy Gartland's was that which he took, and as he walked rapidly he soon found himself at the village in which she lived.

It was now a little after twilight; the night was clear, the moon being in her first quarter, and the clouds through which she appeared to struggle were light and fleecy, but rather cold-looking—such, in short, as would seem to promise a sudden fall of snow. Frank had passed the first two cabins of the village, and was in the act of parrying the attacks of some yelping cur that assailed him, when he received a slap on the back, accompanied by a *gho manhi Dhea ghud, a Franchas, co wul thu guilh a nish, a rogora dhu?*

"Who's this?" exclaimed Frank—"eh! why, Darby More, you smilin' thief o' the world, is this you?"

"Ay, indeed; an' you're goin' down to Peggy's?" said the other, pointing significantly towards Peggy Gartland's house. "Well, man, what's the harm? She may get worse—that is, hopin' still that you'll mend your manners, *a bouchal.* But isn't your nose out o' joint there, Frank, darlin'?"

"No sich thing at all, Darby," replied Frank, gulping down his indignation, which rose afresh on hearing that the terms on which he stood with Peggy were so notorious.

"Throth but it is," said Darby; "an' to tell the blessed thruth, I'm not sarry that it's out o' joint; for when I tould you to lave the case in my hands, along wid a small thrifle o' silver that didn't signify much to you, whoo! not at all—you'd rather play it at cards, or dhrink it, or spind it wid no good. Out o' joint! *musha,* if ever a man's nose was to be pitied, yours is: why, didn't Mike Reillaghan put it out

o' joint twiist? first in regard to Peggy, and secondly by the batin' he gave you an it."

"It's well known, Darby," replied Frank, "that 'twas by a chance blow he did it; and you know a chance blow might kill the divil."

"But there was no danger of Mike's gettin' the chance blow," observed the sarcastic vagrant, for such he was.

"Maybe it's afore him," replied his companion; "we'll have another thrial for it, anyhow. But where are you goin,' Darby? Is it to the dance?"

"Me! Is it a man wid two holy ordhers an him? No, no! I might go up, maybe as far as your father's, merely to see the family, only for the night that's in it; but I'm goin' to another frind's place to spind my Chris'mas, an' over an' above I must go to the Midnight Mass. Frank, change your coorses an' mind your life, an' don't be the talk o' the parish. Remimber me to the family, an' say I'll see them soon."

"How long will you stop in the neighbourhood?" inquired Frank.

"*Arrah,* why, *acushla?*" replied the mendicant, softening his language.

"I might be wantin' to see you some o' these days," said the other—"indeed, it's not unlikely, Darby; so don't go, anyhow, widout seein' me."

"Ah!" said Darby, "had you taken a fool's advice—but it can't be helped—the harm's done, I doubt; how-an'-ever, for the matther o' that, maybe I have as good as Peggy in my eye for you. By the same token, as the night's cowld, warm your tooth, *avick;* there's waker wather nor this in Lough Corr. Sorra sup of it ever I keep for my own use at all, barrin' when I take a touch o' configuration in my bowels, or maybe when I'm too long at my prayers; for, God help me, sure I'm but sthrivin,' wid the help of one thing an' another, to work out my salvation as well as I can! Your health, anyhow, an' a merry Chris'mas to you!—not forgettin' myself," he added, putting to his lips a large cow's horn which he kept slung beneath his arm like the bugle of a coach-guard, only that this was generally concealed by an outside coat, no two inches of which were of the same material or colour. Having taken a tolerably large draught

from this, which, by the way, held near two quarts, he handed it, with a smack and a shrug, to Frank, who immediately gave it a wipe with the skirt of his coat, and pledged his companion.

"I'll be wantin'," observed Frank, "to see you in the hollydays—faith, that stuff's to be christened yet, Darby—so don't go till we have a dish o' discoorse about somethin' I'll mintion to you. As for Peggy Gartland, I'm done wid her; she may marry ould Nick for me."

"Or you for ould Nick," said the cynic, "which would be nearly the same thing. But go an, *avick*, an' never heed me; sure, I must have my spake—doesn't everybody know Darby More?"

"I've nothin' else to say now," added Frank, "and you have my authority to spread it as far as you plase. I'm done wid her; so good night, an' good cuttin'[1] to your horn, Darby!—You damn ould villain!" he subjoined, in a low voice, when Darby had got out of his hearing; "surely it's not in yourself, but in the blessed words and things you have about you, that there is any good."

"*Musha*, good night, Frank, *alanna*," replied the other; "an' the divil sweep you for a skamin' vagabone, that's a curse to the country, and has kep me out o' more weddins than any one I ever met wid, by your roguery in puttin' evil between frinds an' neighbours jist when they'd be ready for the priest to say the words over them. Good won't come of you, you profligate."

The last words were scarcely uttered by the sturdy mendicant, when he turned round to observe whether or not Frank would stop at Larry Gartland's, the father of the girl to whom he had hitherto unsuccessfully avowed his attachment.

"I'd depind on him," said he, in a soliloquy, "as soon as I'd depind upon ice of an hour's growth; an' whether or not, sure as I'm an my way to Owen Reillaghan's, the father of the dacent boy that he's strivin' to outdo, mayn't I as well watch his motions, anyway?"

He accordingly proceeded along the shadowy side of the street, in order to avoid Frank's eye, should he chance to

[1] Good cuttin'—May what's in it never fail.

look back, and quietly dodged on until he fairly saw him enter the house.

Having satisfied himself that the object of Frank's visit to the village was in some shape connected with Peggy Gartland, the mendicant immediately retraced his steps, and, at a pace more rapid than usual, strided on to Owen Reillaghan's, whither he arrived just in time to secure an excellent Christmas Eve dinner.

In Ireland that description of mendicants which differs so strikingly from the common crowd of beggars as to constitute a distinct species, comprehends within itself as anomalous an admixture of fun and devotion, external rigour and private licentiousness, love of superstition and of good whisky, as might naturally be supposed, without any great stretch of credulity, to belong to men thrown among a people in whom so many extremes of character and morals meet. The known beggar, who goes his own rounds, and has his own walk, always adapts his character to that of his benefactor, whose whims and peculiarities of temper he studies with industry, and generally with success. By this means, joined to a dexterity in tracing out the private history of families and individuals, he is enabled to humour the caprices, to manage the eccentricities, and to touch with a masterly hand the prejudices and particular opinions of his patrons; and this he contrives to do with great address and tact. Such was the character of Darby More, whose person, naturally large, was increased to an enormous size by the number of coats, blankets, and bags with which he was encumbered. A large belt buckled round his body, contained within its girth much more of money, meal, and whisky than ever met the eye; his hat was exceedingly low in the crown; his legs were cased in at least three pairs of stockings; and in his hand he carried a long cant, spiked at the lower end, with which he slung himself over small rivers and dykes, and kept dogs at bay. He was a devotee, too, notwithstanding the whisky-horn under his arm; attending wakes, christenings, and weddings; rubbed for the rose[1] and king's evil (for the varlet insisted that he was a seventh son); cured toothaches, colics, and

[1] A scrofulous swelling.

headaches by charms; but made most money by a knack which he possessed of tattooing into the naked breast the representation of Christ upon the cross. This was a secret of considerable value, for many of the superstitious people believed that by having this stained in upon them they would escape unnatural deaths, and be almost sure of heaven.

When Darby approached Reillaghan's house he was considering the propriety of disclosing to his son the fact of his having left his rival with Peggy Gartland. He ultimately determined that it would be proper to do so; for he was shrewd enough to suspect that the wish Frank had expressed of seeing him before he left the country was but a *ruse* to purchase his silence touching his appearance in the village. In this, however, he was mistaken.

"God save the house!" exclaimed Darby, on entering—"God save the house, an' all that's in it! God save it to the north!" and he formed the sign of the cross in every direction to which he turned; "God save it to the south! ✠ to the aiste! ✠ and to the wist! ✠ Save it upwards! ✠ and save it downwards! ✠ Save it backwards! ✠ and save it forwards! ✠ Save it right! ✠ and save it left! ✠ Save it by night! ✠ save it by day! ✠ Save it here! ✠ save it there! ✠ Save it this way! ✠ an' save it that way! ✠ Save it atin'! ✠ ✠ ✠ an' save it drinkin'! ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ Oxis Doxis Glorioxis—Amin. An' now that I've blessed the place in the name of the nine Patriarchs, how are yees all, man, woman, and child? An' a merry Christmas to yees, says Darby More."

Darby, in the usual spirit of Irish hospitality, received a sincere welcome, was placed up near the fire, a plate filled with the best food on the table laid before him, and requested to want nothing for the asking.

"Why, Darby," said Reillaghan, "we expected you long ago; why didn't you come sooner?"

"The Lord's will be done! for ev'ry man has his troubles," replied Darby, stuffing himself in the corner like an epicure; "an' why should a sinner like me, or the likes o' me, be widout thim? 'Twas a dhrame I had last night that kep me. They say, indeed, that dhrames go by contraries, but not always, to my own knowledge."

"And what was the dhrame about, Darby?" inquired Reillaghan's wife.

"Why, ma'am, about some that I see on this hearth, well an' in good health. May they long live to be so! Oxis Doxis Glorioxis—Amin!" ✠ ✠ ✠

"Blessed Virgin! Darby, sure it would be nothin' bad that's to happen—would it, Darby?"

"Keep yourself asy on that head. I have widin my own mind the power of makin' it come out for good—I know the prayer for it. Oxis Doxis!" ✠ ✠

"God be praised for that, Darby; sure it would be a terrible business, all out, if anything was to happen. Here's Mike, that was born on Whissle Monday,[1] of all days in the year, an,' you know, they say that any child born on that day is to die an unnatural death. We named Mike after St. Michael, that he might purtect him."

"Make yourself asy, I say; don't I tell you I have the prayer to keep it back—hach! hach!—why, there's a bit stuck in my throath, some way! *Wurrah dheelish,* what's this! Maybe you could give me a sup o' dhrink—wather, or anything—to moisten the morsel I'm 'atin'? *Wurrah,* ma'am dear, make haste, it's goin' agin the breath wid me!"

"Oh, the sorra taste o' wather, Darby," said Owen; "sure this is Christmas Eve, you know; so you see, Darby, for ould acquaintance' sake, an' that you may put up an odd prayer now an' thin for us, jist be thryin' this."

Darby honoured the gift by immediate acceptance.

"Well, Owen Reillaghan," said he, "you make me take more o' this stuff nor any man I know; and particularly by rason that bein' given, wid a blessin', to the *ranns,* an' prayers, an' holy charms, I don't think it so good; barrin', indeed, as Father Dannellan tould me, when the wind, by long fastin', gets into my stomach, as was the case to-day, I'm often throubled, God help me, wid a configuration in the—hugh! ugh!—and thin it's good for me—a little of it."

"This would make a brave powdher-horn, Darby More,"

[1] Any child born on Whit Sunday or the day after is believed by the more ignorant to be doomed to an unnatural death.

observed one of Reillaghan's sons, "if it wasn't so big. What do you keep in it, Darby?"

"Why *a villish*, nothin', indeed, but a sup o' Father Dannellan's holy wather, that they say, by all accounts, it cost him great trouble to make, by rason that he must fast a long time, and pray by the day, afore he gets himself holy enough to consecrate it."

"It smells like whisky, Darby," said the boy, without any intention, however, of offending him; "it smells very like *poteen*."

"Hould yer tongue, Risthard," said the elder Reillaghan; "what ud make the honest man have whisky in it? Didn't he tell you what's in it?"

"The *gorsoon's* right enough," replied Darby; "I got the horn from Barny Dalton a couple o' days agone; 'twas whisky he had in it, an' it smells of it sure enough, an' will indeed for some time longer. Och! och! the heavens be praised, I've made a good dinner! May they never know want that gave it to me! Oxis Doxis Glorioxis—Amin!" ✠ ✠ ✠

"Darby, thry this agin," said Reillaghan, offering him another bumper.

"Throth an' I will, thin, for I find myself a great dale the betther of the one I tuck. Well, here's health an' happiness to us, an' may we all meet in heaven! Risthard, hand me that horn till I be going out to the barn, in ordher to do somethin' for my sowl. The holy wather's a good thing to have about one."

"But the dhrame, Darby?" inquired Mrs. Reillaghan. "Won't you tell it to us?"

"Let Mike follow me to the barn," he replied, "an' I'll tell him as much of it as he ought to hear. An' now let all of yees prepare for the Midnight Mass: go there wid proper intintions, an' not to be coortin' or dhrinking by the way. We're all sinners, anyway, an' oughtn't to neglect our sowls. Oxis Doxis Glorioxis. Amin!"

He immediately strode, with the horn under his arm, towards the barn, where he knelt, and began his orisons in a tone sufficiently loud to be heard in the kitchen.

When he was gone, Mrs. Reillaghan, who, with the curiosity natural to her sex, and the superstition peculiar to her station

in life, felt anxious to hear Darby's dream, urged Mike to follow him forthwith, that he might prevail on him to detail it at full length.

Darby, who knew not exactly what the dream ought to be, replied to Mike's inquiries vaguely.

"Mike," said he, "until the proper time comes, I can't tell it; but listen, take my advice an' slip down to Peggy Gartland's by-and-by. I have strong suspicions, if my dhrame is thrue, that Frank M'Kenna has a design upon her. People may be abroad this night widout bein' noticed by rason o' the Midnight Mass; Frank has friends in Kilnaheery, up behind the mountains, an' the divil might timpt him to bring her there. Keep your eye an him, or rather an Peggy. If my dhrame's true, he was there this night."

"I thought I gave him enough on her account," said Mike. "The poor girl hasn't a day's pace in regard of him; but, plase goodness, I'll soon put an end to it, for I'll marry her durin' the hollydays."

"Go, *avick*, an' let me finish my *Padareen Partha;* I have to get through it before the Midnight Mass comes. Slip down and find out what he was doin', and when you come back let me know."

Mike, perfectly aware of young M'Kenna's character, immediately went towards Lisdrum, for so the village where Peggy Gartland lived was called. He felt the danger to be apprehended from the interference of his rival the more acutely, inasmuch as he was not ignorant of the feuds and quarrels which the former had frequently produced between friends and neighbours by the subtle poison of his falsehoods, which were both wanton and malicious. He therefore advanced at an unusually brisk pace, and had nearly reached the village when he perceived in the distance a person resembling Frank approaching him at a pace nearly as rapid as his own.

"If it's Frank M'Kenna," thought he, "he must pass me, for this is his straight line home."

It appeared, however, that he had been mistaken; for he whom he had supposed to be the object of his enmity crossed the field by a different path, and seemed to be utterly ignorant of the person whom he was about to meet, so far at least as

a quick, free, unembarrassed step could intimate his unacquaintance with him.

The fact, however, was that Reillaghan, had the person whom he met approached him more nearly, would have found his first suspicions correct. Frank was then on his return from Gartland's, and no sooner perceived Reillaghan, whom he immediately recognised by his great height, than he took another path in order to avoid him. The enmity between these rivals was deep and implacable; aggravated on the one hand by a sense of unmerited injury, and on the other by personal defeat and the bitterest jealousy. For this reason neither of them wished to meet, particularly Frank M'Kenna, who not only hated but feared his enemy.

Having succeeded in avoiding Reillaghan, the latter soon reached home; but here he found the door closed, and the family, with a single exception, in the barn, which was now nearly crowded with the youngsters of both sexes from the surrounding villages.

Frank's arrival among them gave a fresh impulse to their mirth and enjoyment. His manners were highly agreeable, and his spirits buoyant almost to levity. Notwithstanding the badness of his character in the opinion of the sober, steady, and respectable inhabitants of the parish, yet he was a favourite with the dissolute and thoughtless, and with many who had not an opportunity of seeing him except in his most favourable aspect. Whether he entertained on this occasion any latent design that might have induced him to assume a frankness of manner and an appearance of good humour which he did not feel, it is difficult to determine. Be this as it may, he made himself generally agreeable, saw that every one was comfortable, suggested an improvement in the arrangement of the seats, broke several jests on Barny and *Granua Waile*—which, however, were returned with interest—and in fact acquitted himself so creditably that his father whispered with a sigh to his mother—

"Alley, *achora*, wouldn't we be the happy family if that misfortunate boy of ours was to be always the thing he appears to be? God help him! the *gommach*, if he had sinse and the fear o' God before him, he'd not be sich a piece o' desate to sthrangers, and sich a divil's limb wid ourselves;

but he's young, an' may see his evil coorses in time wid the help o' God."

"*Musha,* may God grant it!" exclaimed his mother. "A fine slip he is, if his heart ud only turn to the right thoughts. One can't help feelin' pride out o' him when they see him actin' wid any kind o' rason."

The Irish dance, like every other assembly composed of Irishmen and Irishwomen, presents the spectator with those traits which enter into our conception of rollicking fun and broad humour. The very arrangements are laughable; and when joined to the eccentric strains of some blind fiddler like Barny *Dhal,* to the grotesque and caricaturish faces of the men, and the modest but evidently arch and laughter-loving countenances of the females, they cannot fail to impress an observing mind with the obvious truth that a nation of people so thoughtless and easily directed from the serious and useful pursuits of life to such scenes can seldom be industrious and wealthy, nor, despite their mirth and humour, a happy people.

The barn in which they danced on this occasion was a large one. Around the walls were placed as many seats as could be spared from the neighbours' houses; these were eked out by sacks of corn laid lengthwise, logs of round timber, old creels, iron pots with their bottoms turned up, and some of them in their usual position. On these were the youngsters seated; many of the "boys" with their sweethearts on their knees, the arms of the fair ones lovingly around their necks; and, on the contrary, many of the young women with their bachelors on their laps, their own necks also gallantly encircled by the arms of their admirers. Up in a corner sat Barny, surrounded by the seniors of the village, sawing the fiddle with indefatigable vigour, and leading the conversation with equal spirit. Indeed, his laugh was the loudest and his joke the best, whilst ever and anon his music became perfectly furious—that is to say, when he rasped the fiddle with a desperate effort "to overtake the dancers," from whom, in the heat of the conversation, he had unwittingly lagged behind.

Dancing in Ireland, like everything else connected with the amusement of the people, is frequently productive of

bloodshed. It is not unusual for crack dancers from opposite parishes or from distant parts of the same parish to meet and dance against each other for victory; but as the judges in those cases consist of the respective friends or factions of the champions, their mode of decision may readily be conjectured. Many a battle is fought in consequence of such challenges, the result usually being that not he who has the lightest heel, but the hardest head, generally comes off the conqueror.

While the usual variety of Irish dances—the reel, jig, fling, three-part-reel, four-part-reel, rowly-powly, country-dance, *cotillon* (or cut-along, as the peasantry call it), and minuet, (vulgarly, minion, and minionet)—were going forward in due rotation, our readers may be assured that those who were seated around the walls did not permit the time to pass without improving it. Many an attachment is formed at such amusements, and many a bitter jealousy is excited; the prude and coquette, the fop and rustic Lothario, stand out here as prominently to the eye of him who is acquainted with human nature as they do in similar assemblies among the great; perhaps more so, as there is less art, and a more limited knowledge of intrigue to conceal their natural character.

The dance in Ireland usually commences with those who sit next the door, from whence it goes round with the sun. In this manner it circulates two or three times, after which the order is generally departed from, and they dance according as they can. This neglect of the established rule is also a fertile source of discord; for when two persons rise at the same time, if there be not room for both, the right of dancing first is often decided by blows.

At the dance we are describing, however, there was no dissension: every heart appeared to be not only elated with mirth, but also free from resentment and jealousy. The din produced by the thumping of vigorous feet upon the floor, the noise of the fiddle, the chat between Barny and the little sober knot about him, together with the brisk murmur of the general conversation, and the expression of delight which sat on every countenance, had something in them elevating to the spirits.

Barny, who knew the voices, and even the mode of dancing peculiar to almost every one in the barn, had some joke for

each. When a young man brings out his sweetheart—which he frequently does in a manner irresistibly ludicrous, sometimes giving a spring from the earth, his *caubeen* set with a knowing air on one side of his head, advancing at a trot on tiptoe, catching her by the ear, leading her out to her position, which is "to face the fiddler," then ending by a snap of the fingers and another spring, in which he brings his heel backwards in contact with his ham—we say, when a young man brings out his sweetheart, and places her facing the fiddler, he asks her what she will dance; to which, if she has no favourite tune, she uniformly replies, "Your will is my pleasure." This usually made Barny groan aloud.

"What ails you, Barny?"

"Oh, thin, murdher alive, how little thruth's in this world! 'Your will's my pleasure!' *Baithershin!* but, sowl, if things goes an, it won't be long so!"

"Why, Barny," the young man would exclaim, "is the ravin' fit comin' over you?"

"No, in throth, Jim; but it's thinkin' of home I am. How-and-iver, do you go an; but *naboclish!* what'll you have?"

"'Jig Polthogue,' Barny; but oil your wrist, *a bouchal*, or Katty will lave us both out o' sight in no time. Whoo! success! clear the coorse! Well done, Barny! That's the go!"

When the youngsters had danced for some time, the fathers and mothers of the village were called upon "to step out." This was generally the most amusing scene in the dance. No excuse is ever taken on such occasions; for, when they refuse, about a dozen young fellows place them, will they, nil they, upright upon the floor, from whence neither themselves nor their wives are permitted to move until they dance. No sooner do they commence than they are mischievously pitted against each other by two sham parties, one encouraging the wife, the other cheering on the good man; whilst the fiddler, falling in with the frolic, plays in his most furious style. The simplicity of character, and perhaps the lurking vanity of those who are the butts of the mirth on this occasion, frequently heighten the jest.

"Why, thin, Paddy, is it strivin' to outdo me you are? Faiks, *avourneen*, you never seen that day, anyway," the old woman would exclaim, exerting all her vigour.

"Didn't I! Sowl, I'll sober you before I lave the flure, for all that," her husband would reply.

"An' do you forget," she would rejoin, "that the M'Carthy dhrop is in me; ay, an' it's to the good still."

And the old dame would accompany the boast with a fresh attempt at agility; to which Paddy would respond by "cutting the buckle" and snapping his fingers; whilst fifty voices, amidst roars of laughter, were loud in encouraging each.

"Handle your feet, Katty darlin'—the mettle's lavin' him!"

"Off wid the brogues, Paddy, or she'll do you. That's it—kick off the other, an' don't spare the flure."

"A thousand guineas an Katty! M'Carthy agin Gallagher for ever!—whirroo!"

"Blur alive, the flure's not benefitin' by you, Paddy. Lay an it, man!—that's it!—bravo!—whish!—our side agin Europe!"

"Success, Paddy! Why, you could dance the 'Dusty Miller' upon a flure paved wid drawn razures, you're so soople."

"Katty for ever! The blood's in you, Katty; you'll win the day, *a ban choir!* More power to you!"

"I'll hould a quart on Paddy. Heel an' toe, Paddy, you sinner!"

"Right an' left, Katty—hould an, his breath's goin'."

"Right an' wrong, Paddy, you *spalpeen.* The whisky's an you, man alive; do it dacently, an' don't let me lose the wager."

In this manner would they incite some old man, and perhaps his older wife, to prolonged exertion, and keep them bobbing and jigging about amidst roars of laughter, until the worthy couple could dance no longer.

During stated periods of the night those who took the most prominent part in the dance got a plate and hat, with which they went round the youngsters, to make collections for the fiddler. Barny reserved his best and most sarcastic jokes for these occasions; for so correct was his ear that he felt little difficulty in detecting those whose contributions to him were such as he did not relish.

The aptitude of the Irish for enjoying humorous images

was well displayed by one or two circumstances which occurred on this night. A few of both sexes, who had come rather late, could get no other seats than the iron pots to which we have alluded. The young women were dressed in white, and their companions, who were also their admirers, exhibited, in proud display, each a brand new suit, consisting of broadcloth coat, yellow buff vests, and corduroy small-clothes, with a bunch of broad silk ribbons standing out at each knee. They were the sons and daughters of respectable farmers; but as all distinctions here entirely ceased, they were fain to rest contented with such seats as they could get, which on this occasion consisted of the pots aforesaid. No sooner, however, had they risen to dance than the house was convulsed with laughter, heightened by the sturdy vigour with which, unconscious of their appearance, they continued to dance. That part of the white female dresses which had come in contact with the pots exhibited a circle like the full moon, and was black as pitch. Nor were their partners more lucky; those who sat on the mouths of the pots had the back part of their dresses streaked with dark circles, equally ludicrous. The mad mirth with which they danced, in spite of their grotesque appearance, was irresistible. This, and other incidents quite as pleasant—such as the case of a wag who purposely sank himself into one of the pots, until it stuck to him through half the dance—increased the laughter, and disposed them to peace and cordiality.

No man took a more active part in these frolics than young Frank M'Kenna. It is true a keen eye might have noticed under his gaiety something of a moody and dissatisfied air. As he moved about from time to time, he whispered something to above a dozen persons who were well known in the country as his intimate companions, young fellows whose disposition and character were notoriously bad. When he communicated the whisper, a nod of assent was given by his confidants, after which it might be remarked that they moved round to the door with a caution that betrayed a fear of observation, and quietly slunk out of the barn, though Frank himself did not immediately follow them. In about a quarter of an hour afterwards Rody came in, gave him a signal, and sat down. Frank then followed his companions,

and after a few minutes Rody also disappeared. This was about ten o'clock, and the dance was proceeding with great gaiety and animation.

Frank's dread of openly offending his parents prevented him from assembling his associates in the dwelling-house; the only convenient place of rendezvous, therefore, of which they could avail themselves was the stable. Here they met, and Frank, after uncorking a bottle of poteen, addressed them to the following effect:—

"Boys, there's great excuse for me in regard of my fight wid Mike Reillaghan; that you'll all allow. Come, boys, your healths! I can tell yees you'll find this good, the divil a doubt of it—be the same token, that I stole it from my father's Christmas drink; but no matther for that—I hope we'll never do worse. So, as I was sayin', you must bear me out as well as you can when I'm brought before the Diligates to-morrow for challengin' and strikin' a brother.[1] But I think you'll stand by me, boys?"

"By the tarn-o'-war, Frank, myself will fight to the knees for you."

"Faith, you may depend on us, Frank, or we're not to the fore."

"I know it, boys; and now for a piece of fun for this night. You see—come, Lanty, tare-an-ounkers, drink, man alive—you see, wid regard to Peggy Gartland—eh? what the hell! is that a cough?"

"One o' the horses, man—go an."

"Rody, did Darby More go into the barn before you came out of it?"

"Darby More?—not he. If he did, I'd a seen him, surely."

"Why, thin, I'd kiss the book I seen him goin' towards the barn as I was comin' into the stable. Sowl, he's a made boy, that; an' if I don't mistake, he's in Mike Reillaghan's intherest. You know devil a sacret can escape him."

"Hut! the prayin' ould crathur was on his way to the Midnight Mass; he thravels slow, and, of coorse, has to set

[1] Those connected with illegal combinations are sworn to have no private or personal quarrels, not to strike, nor provoke each other to fight. Frank and Mike were members of such societies.

out early; besides, you know, he has carols, and bades, and the likes, to sell at the chapel."

"Thrue for you, Rody; why, I thought he might take it into his head to watch my motions, in regard that, as I said, I think him in Mike's intherest."

"Nonsense, man, what the dickens ud bring him into the stable loft? Why, you're beside yourself!"

"Begor, I bleeve so, but no matther. Boys, I want yees to stand to me to-night. I'm given to know for a sartinty that Mike and Peggy will be buckled to durin' the hollydays. Now I wish to get the girl myself; for if I don't get her, may I be ground to atoms if he will."

"Well, but how will you manage? for she's fond of him."

"Why, I'll tell you that. I was over there this evenin', and I understand that all the family is goin' to the Midnight Mass, barrin' herself. You see, while they're all gone to the 'mallet-office,'[1] we'll slip down wid a thrifle o' soot on our mugs, and walk off wid her to Kilnaheery, beyant the mountains, to an uncle's o' mine; an' after that let any man marry her who chooses to run the risk. Be the contints o' the book, Atty, if you don't dhrink I'll knock your head agin the wall, you *gommach!*"

"Why, thin, by all that's beautiful, it's a good spree; an' we'll stick to you like pitch."

"Be the vartue o' my oath, you don't desarve to be in it, or you'd dhrink dacent. Why, here's another bottle, an' maybe there's more where that was. Well, let us finish what we have, or, be the five crasses, I'll give up the whole business."

"Why, thin, here's success to us, anyway; an' high hangin' to them that ud desart you in your skame this blessed an' holy night that's in it!"

This was re-echoed by his friends, who pledged themselves by the most solemn oaths not to abandon him in the perpetration of the outrage which they had concerted. The other bottle was immediately opened, and while it lasted the details of the plan were explained at full length. This over, they entered the barn one by one, except Frank and Rody, who,

[1] Attending mass is called "going to the mallet-office"—an allusion to the beating of breasts in prayers.—ED.

as they were determined to steal another bottle from the father's stock, did not appear among the dancers until this was accomplished.

The reappearance of these rollicking and reckless young fellows in the dance was hailed by all present; for their outrageous mirth was in character with the genius of the place. The dance went on with spirit; brag dancers were called upon to exhibit in hornpipes, and for this purpose a table was brought in from Frank's kitchen, on which they performed in succession, each dancer applauded by his respective party as the best in the barn.

In the meantime the night had advanced; the hour might be about half-past ten o'clock; all were in the zenith of enjoyment, when old Frank M'Kenna addressed them as follows:—

"Neighbours, the dickens o' one o' me would like to break up the sport—an', in troth, harmless and dacent sport it is; but you all know that this is Christmas night, and that it's our duty to attind the Midnight Mass. Anybody that likes to hear it may go, for it's near time to be home an' prepare for it; but the sorra one o' me wants to take any of yees from your sport, if you prefer it—all I say is that I must lave yees; so God be wid yees till we meet agin!"

This short speech produced a general bustle in the barn; many of the elderly neighbours left it, and several of the young persons also. It was Christmas Eve, and the Midnight Mass had from time immemorial so strong a hold upon their prejudices and affections that the temptation must indeed have been great which would have prevented them from attending it. When old Frank went out, about one-third of those who were present left the dance along with him, and, as the hour for mass was approaching, they lost no time in preparing for it.

The Midnight Mass is, no doubt, a phrase familiar to our Irish readers; but we doubt whether those in the sister kingdoms who may honour our book with a perusal would, without a more particular description, clearly understand it.

This ceremony was performed as a commemoration not only of the night but of the hour in which Christ was born. To connect it either with edification or the abuse of

religion would be invidious; so we overlook that, and describe it as it existed within our own memory, remarking by the way, that though now generally discontinued, it is in some parts of Ireland still observed, or has been till within a few years ago.

The parish in which the scene of this story is laid was large, consequently the attendance of the people was proportionably great. On Christmas Day a Roman Catholic priest has, or is said to have, the privilege of saying three masses, though on every other day in the year he can celebrate but two. Each priest, then, said one at midnight, and two on the following day.

Accordingly, about twenty or thirty years ago the performance of the Midnight Mass was looked upon as an ordinance highly important and interesting. The preparations for it were general and fervent; so much so, that not a Roman Catholic family slept till they heard it. It is true it only occurred once a year; but had any person who saw it once been called upon to describe it, he would say that religion could scarcely present a scene so wild and striking.

The night in question was very dark, for the moon had long disappeared, and as the inhabitants of the whole parish were to meet in one spot, it may be supposed that the difficulty was very great of traversing, in the darkness of midnight, the space between their respective residences and the place appointed by the priest for the celebration of mass. This difficulty they contrived to surmount. From about eleven at night till twelve or one o'clock the parish presented a scene singularly picturesque, and, to a person unacquainted with its causes, altogether mysterious. Over the surface of the surrounding country were scattered myriads of blazing torches, all converging to one point; whilst at a distance, in the central part of the parish, which lay in a valley, might be seen a broad focus of red light, quite stationary, with which one or more of the torches that moved across the fields mingled every moment. These torches were of bog-fir, dried and split for the occasion. All persons were accordingly furnished with them, and by their blaze contrived to make way across the country with comparative ease. This mass, having been especially associated

with festivity and enjoyment, was always attended by such excessive numbers that the ceremony was in most parishes celebrated in the open air, if the weather were at all favourable. Altogether, as we have said, the appearance of the country at this dead hour of the night was wild and impressive. Being Christmas, every heart was up, and every pocket replenished with money, if it could at all be procured. This general elevation of spirits was nowhere more remarkable than in contemplating the thousands of both sexes, old and young, each furnished, as before said, with a blazing flambeau of bog-fir, all streaming down the mountain-sides, along the roads, or across the fields, and settling at last into one broad sheet of fire. Many a loud laugh might then be heard ringing the night echo into reverberation; mirthful was the gabble in hard, guttural Irish; and now and then a song from some one whose potations had been rather copious would rise on the night breeze, to which a chorus was subjoined by a dozen voices from the neighbouring groups.

On passing the *shebeen* and public-houses, the din of mingled voices that issued from them was highly amusing, made up, as it was, of songs, loud talk, rioting, and laughter, with an occasional sound of weeping from some one who had become penitent in his drink. In the larger public-houses (for in Ireland there usually are one or two of these in the immediate vicinity of each chapel) family parties were assembled, who set in to carouse both before and after mass. Those, however, who had any love affairs on hand generally selected the shebeen house, as being private, and less calculated to expose them to general observation. As a matter of course, these jovial orgies frequently produced such disastrous consequences both to human life and female reputation, that the intrigues between the sexes, the quarrels, and violent deaths resulting from them ultimately occasioned the discontinuance of a ceremony which was only productive of evil. To this day it is an opinion among the peasantry in many parts of Ireland that there is something unfortunate connected with all drinking bouts held upon Christmas Eve. Such a prejudice naturally arises from a recollection of the calamities which so frequently befell many individuals while Midnight Masses were in the habit of being celebrated.

None of Frank M'Kenna's family attended mass but himself and his wife. His children, having been bound by all the rules of courtesy to do the honours of the dance, could not absent themselves from it; nor indeed were they disposed to do so. Frank, however, and his "good woman" carried their torches, and joined the crowds which flocked to this scene of fun and devotion.

When they had arrived at the cross-roads beside which the chapel was situated, the first object that presented itself so prominently as to attract observation was Darby More, dressed out in all his paraphernalia of blanket and horn, in addition to which he held in his hand an immense torch, formed into the figure of a cross. He was seated upon a stone, surrounded by a ring of old men and women, to whom he sang and sold a variety of Christmas carols, many of them rare curiosities in their way, inasmuch as they were his own composition. A little beyond them stood Mike Reillaghan and Peggy Gartland, towards both of whom he cast from time to time a glance of latent humour and triumph. He did not simply confine himself to singing his carols, but during the pauses of the melody addressed the wondering and attentive crowd as follows:—

"Good Christians—this is the day—how-and-iver, it's night now, glory be to God—that the angel Lucifer appeared to Shud'orth,[1] Meeshach, an' To-bed-we-go, in the village of Constantinople, near Jerooslem. The heavens be praised for it, 'twas a blessed an' holy night, an' remains so from that day to this—Oxis Doxis Glorioxis, Amin! Well, the sarra one of him but appeared to thim at the hour o' midnight; but they were asleep at the time, you see, and didn't persave him; so wid that he pulled out a horn like mine—an', by the same token, it's lucky to wear horns about one from that day to this—an' he put it to his lips an' tuck a good dacent—I mane, gave a good dacent blast that soon roused them. 'Are yees asleep?' says he, when they awoke. 'Why, then, bud-an-age!' says he, 'isn't it a burning shame for able stout fellows like yees to be asleep at the hour o' midnight of all hours o' the

[1] *Shud urth* is an Irish salutation or toast (see Glossary). Darby means Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who were unharmed by the fiery furnace.—ED.

night. Tare-an-age!' says he, 'get up wid yees, you dirty *spalpeens!* There's St. Pathrick in Jerooslem beyant; the Pope's signin' his mittimus to Ireland, to bless it in regard that neither corn, nor barley, nor phaties will grow an the land in consequence of a set of varmint that ates it up; an' there's not a glass o' whisky to be had in Ireland for love or money,' says Lucifer. 'Get up wid yees,' says he, 'an' go in an' get his blessin'; sure, there's not a Catholic in the counthry, barrin' Swaddlers,[1] but's in the town by this,' says he; 'ay, an' many o' the Protestants themselves, and the "black-mouths,"[2] an' "blue-bellies" are gone in to get a share of it. And now,' says he, 'bekase you wor so heavy-headed, I ordher it from this out, that the present night is to be obsarved in the Catholic Church all over the world, an' must be kep holy; an' no thrue Catholic ever will miss from this pariod an opportunity of bein' awake at midnight,' says he, 'glory be to God!' An' now, good Christians, you have an account o' the blessed carol I was singin' for yees. They're but hapuns apiece; an' anybody that has the grace to keep one o' these about them will never meet wid sudden deaths or accidents, sich as hangin', or drownin', or bein' taken suddenly wid a configuration inwardly. I wanst knew a holy man that had a dhrame—about a friend of his it was—will any of yees take one? Thank you, *a colleen*—my blessin', the blessin' o' the pilgrim be an you! God bless you, Mike Reillaghan; an' I'm proud that he put it into your heart to buy one, for the rasons you know. An' now that Father Hoolaghan's comin', any of yees that 'ill want them 'ill find me here agin when mass is over—Oxis Doxis Glorioxis, Amin!"

The priest at this time made his appearance, and those who had been assembled on the cross-roads joined the crowd at the chapel. No sooner was it bruited among them that their pastor had arrived, than the noise, gabble, singing, and laughing were immediately hushed; the shebeen and public houses were left untenanted; and all flocked to the chapel green, where mass was to be said, as the crowd was too large to be contained within the small chapel.

[1] Perverts from Catholicity. [2] Presbyterians.

Mike Reillaghan and Peggy Gartland were among the last who sought the "green;" as lovers they probably preferred walking apart, to the inconvenience of being jostled by the multitude. As they sauntered on slowly after the rest, Mike felt himself touched on the shoulder, and on turning round found Darby More beside him.

"It's painful to my feelins," observed the mendicant, "to have to say this blessed night that your father's son should act so shabby an' ondacent."

"Saints above! how, Darby?"

"Why, don't you know that only for me—for what I heard, an' what I tould you—you'd not have the purty girl here at your elbow? Wasn't it, as I said, his intintion to come an' whip up the *colleen* to Kilnaheery while the family ud be at mass? Sure, only for this, I say, you *bosthoon*, an' that I made you bring her to mass, where ud the purty *colleen* be?—why, half-way to Kilnaheery, an' the girl disgraced for ever!"

"Thrue for you, Darby, I grant it; but what do you want me to do?"

"Oh, for that matther, nothin' at all, Mike; only I suppose that when your tailor made the clothes an you he put no pockets to them?"

"Oh, I see where you are, Darby! Well, here's a crown for you; an' when Peggy an' I's made man an' wife you'll get another."

"Mike, *achora*, I see you are your father's son still. Now listen to me. First, you needn't fear sudden death while you keep that blessed carol about you. Next, get your friends together goin' home, for Frank might jist take the liberty, wid about a score of his 'boys,' to lift her from you even thin. Do the thing I say—don't thrust him; an', moreover, watch in her father's house to-night wid your friends. Thirdly, make it up wid Frank; there's an oath upon you both, you persave. Make it up wid him, if he axes you: don't have a broken oath upon you; for if you refuse he'll get you put out o' connection,[1] and that ud plase him to the backbone."

Mike felt the truth and shrewdness of this advice, and

[1] Expel him.

determined to follow it. Both young men had been members of an illegal society, and in yielding to their passions so far as to assault each other, had been guilty of bad faith. The following Christmas Day had been appointed by their parish delegates to take the quarrel into consideration; and the best means of escaping censure was certainly to express regret for what had occurred, and to terminate the hostility by an amicable adjustment of their disputes.

They had now reached the chapel green, where the scene that presented itself was so striking and strange that we will give the reader an imperfect sketch of its appearance. He who stood at midnight upon a little mount which rose behind the chapel might see between five and six thousand torches, all blazing together, and forming a level mass of red, dusky light, burning against the dark horizon. These torches were so close to each other that their light seemed to blend, as if they had constituted one wide surface of flame; and nothing could be more preternatural-looking than the strikingly devotional countenances of those who were assembled at their midnight worship, when observed beneath this canopy of fire. The mass was performed under the open sky, upon a table covered with the sacrificial linen and other apparatus for the ceremony. The priest stood, robed in white, with two large torches on each side of his book, reciting the prayers in a low, rapid voice, his hands raised, whilst the congregation were hushed and bent forward in the reverential silence of devotion, their faces touched by the strong blaze of the torches into an expression of deep solemnity. The scenery about the place was wild and striking; and the stars, scattered thinly over the heavens, twinkled with a faint religious light that blended well with the solemnity of this extraordinary worship, and rendered the rugged nature of the abrupt cliffs and precipices, together with the still outline of the stern mountains, sufficiently visible to add to the wildness and singularity of the ceremony. In fact, there was an unearthly character about it; and the spectre-like appearance of the white-robed priest, as he

"Muttered his prayer to the midnight air,"

would almost impress a man with the belief that it was a

meeting of the dead, and that the priest was repeating, like the Grey Friar, his

"Mass of the days that were gone."

On the ceremony being concluded, the scene, however, was instantly changed: the lights were waved and scattered promiscuously among each other, giving an idea of confusion and hurry that was strongly contrasted with the death-like stillness that prevailed a few minutes before. The gabble and laugh were again heard loud and hearty, and the public and shebeen houses once more became crowded. Many of the young people made, on these occasions, what is called "a run-away;" [1] and other peccadilloes took place, for which the delinquents were either "read out from the altar," or sent probably to St. Patrick's Purgatory at Lough Derg to do penance. Those who did not choose to stop in the whisky houses now hurried home with all speed, to take some sleep before early mass, which was to be performed the next morning about daybreak. The same number of lights might therefore be seen streaming in different ways over the parish; the married men holding the torches, and leading their wives; bachelors escorting their sweethearts, and not unfrequently extinguishing their flambeaux, that the dependence of the females upon their care and protection might more lovingly call forth their gallantry.

When Mike Reillaghan considered with due attention the hint which Darby More had given him touching the necessity of collecting his friends as an escort for Peggy Gartland, he had strong reasons to admit its justness and propriety. After mass he spoke to about two dozen young fellows, who joined him, and under their protection Peggy now returned safely to her father's house.

Frank M'Kenna and his wife reached home about two o'clock; the dance was comparatively thin, though still kept up with considerable spirit. Having solemnised himself by the grace of so sacred a rite, Frank thought proper to close the amusement, and recommend those whom he found in the barn to return to their respective dwellings.

[1] Rustic elopement.

"You have had a merry night, childher," said he; "but too much o' one thing's good for nothin'; so don't make a toil of a pleasure, but go all home dacently an' soberly, in the name o' God."

This advice was accordingly followed. The youngsters separated, and M'Kenna joined his family, "to have a sup along wid the man Barny, in honour of what they had hard." It was upon this occasion he missed his son Frank, whose absence from the dance he had not noticed since his return until then.

"*Musha*, where's Frank?" he inquired. "I'll warrant him away wid his blackguards upon no good. God look down upon him! Many a black heart has that boy left us! If it's not the will o' Heaven, I fear he'll come to no good. Barny, is he long gone from the dance?"

"Throth, Frank, wid the noise an' dancin', an' me bein' *dark*," replied Barny shrewdly, "I can't take an me to say. For all you spake agin him, the sorra one of him but's a clane, dacent, spirited boy as there is widin a great ways of him. Here's all your healths! Faix, girls, you'll all sleep sound to-night."

"Well," said Mrs. M'Kenna, "the knowledge of that Darby More is onknowable! Here's a carol I bought from him, an' if you wor but to hear the explanations he put to it! Why, Father Hoolaghan could hardly outdo him!"

"Divil a man in the five parishes can dance 'Jig Polthogue' wid him, for all that," said Barny. "Many a time *Granua* an' I played it for him, an' you'd know the tune upon his feet. He undherstands a power o' *ranns* an' prayers, an' has charms an' holy herbs for all kinds of ailments, no doubt."

"These men, you see," observed Mrs. M'Kenna, in the true spirit of credulity and superstition, "may do many things that the likes of us oughtn't to do, by rason of their great fastin' an' prayin'."

"Thrue for you, Alley," replied her husband; "but come, let us have a sup more in comfort. The sleep's gone *a shaughran* an us this night, anyway; so, Barny, give us a song, an' afther that we'll have a taste o' prayers, to close the night."

"But you don't think of the long journey I've before me,"

replied Barny; "how-and-iver, if you promise to send some one home wid me, we'll have the song. I wouldn't care, but the night bein' dark, you see, I'll want somebody to guide me."

"Faith, an' it's but rasonable, Barny, an' you must get Rody home wid you. I suppose he's asleep in his bed by this, but we'll rouse him."

Barny replied by a loud triumphant laugh, for this was one of his standing jests.

"Well, Frank," said he, "I never thought you war so soft, an' me can pick my steps the same at night as in daylight. Sure, that's the way I done them to-night when one o' *Granua's* strings broke. 'Sweets o' rosin!' says I; 'a candle —bring me a candle immedintly.' An' down came Rody in all haste wid a candle. 'Six eggs to you, Rody,' says myself, 'an' half a dozen o' them rotten! but you're a bright boy to bring a lit candle to a blind man!' and then he stood a *bauliore* to the whole house—ha, ha, ha!"

Barny, who was not the man to rise first from the whisky, commenced the relation of his choicest anecdotes. Old Frank and the family, being now in a truly genial mood, entered into the spirit of his jests; so that between chat, songs, and whisky, the hour had now advanced to four o'clock. The fiddler was commencing another song, when the door opened, and Frank presented himself nearly, but not altogether, in a state of intoxication; his face was besmeared with blood; and his whole appearance that of a man under the influence of strong passion, such as would seem to be produced by disappointment and defeat.

"What!" said the father; "is it snowin', Frank? Your clothes are covered wid snow!"

"Lord, guard us!" exclaimed the mother; "is that blood upon your face, Frank?"

"It is snowin', and it is blood that's upon my face," answered Frank moodily. "Do you want to know more news?"

"Why, ay indeed," replied his mother, "we want to hear how you came to be cut!"

"You won't hear it, then," he replied.

The mother was silent, for she knew the terrible fits of passion to which he was subject.

The father groaned deeply, and exclaimed, "Frank, Frank,

God help you, an' show you the sins you're committin', an' the heart-scaldin' you're givin' both your mother an' me! What fresh scrimmage had you that you're in that state?"

"Spare yourself the throuble of inquirin'," he replied; "all I can say," he continued, starting up into sudden fury—"all I can say—an' I say it—I swear it—where's the prayer-book?" and he ran frantically to a shelf beside the dresser on which the prayer-book lay—"ay! by Him that made me I'll swear it—by this sacred book, while I live, Mike Reillaghan, the husband of Peggy Gartland you'll never be, if I should swing for it! Now you all seen I kissed the book!" As he spoke he tossed it back upon the shelf.

The mirth that had prevailed in the family was immediately hushed, and a dead silence ensued. Frank sat down, but instantly rose again, and flung the chair from him with such violence that it was crashed to pieces; he muttered oaths and curses, ground his teeth, and betrayed all the symptoms of jealousy, hatred, and disappointment.

"Frank, *a bouchal*," said Barny, commencing to address him in a conciliatory tone—"Frank, man alive——"

"Hould your tongue, I say, you blind vagabone, or, by the night above us, I'll break your fiddle over your skull if you dare to say another word. What I swore I'll do, an' let no one crass me."

He was a powerful young man, and such was his temper, and so well was it understood, that not one of the family durst venture a word of remonstrance.

The father rose, went to the door, and returned. "Barny," said he, "you must contint yourself where you are for this night. It's snowin' heavily, so you had betther sleep wid Rody; I see a light in the barn; I suppose he's afther bringin' in his bed an' makin' it."

"I'll do anything," replied the poor fiddler, now apprehensive of violence from the outrageous temper of young Frank.

"Well, thin," added the good man, "let us all go to bed, in the name of God. Micaul, bring Barny to the barn, and see that he's comfortable."

This was complied with, and the family quietly and timidly retired to rest, leaving the violent young man storming and digesting his passion behind them.

Mass on Christmas morning was then, as now, performed at daybreak, and again the Roman Catholic inhabitants of the parish were up betimes to attend it. Frank M'Kenna's family were assembled, notwithstanding their short sleep, at an early breakfast; but their meal, in consequence of the unpleasant sensation produced by the outrage of their son, was less cheerful than it would otherwise have been. Perhaps, too, the gloom which hung over them was increased by the snow that had fallen the night before, and by the wintry character of the day, which was such as to mar much of their expected enjoyment. There was no allusion made to their son's violence overnight; neither did he himself appear to be in any degree affected by it. When breakfast was over they prepared to attend mass, and, what was unusual, young Frank was the first to set out for the chapel.

"Maybe," said the father, after he was gone—"maybe that fool of a boy is sarry for his behaviour. It's many a day since I knew him to go to mass of his own accord. It's a good sign, anyway."

"*Musha,*" inquired his mother, "what could happen atween him and that civil boy, Mike Reillaghan?"

"The sorra one o' me knows," replied his father; "an' now that I think of it, sure enough there was none o' them at the dance last night, although I sent himself down for them. Micaul," he added, addressing the other son, "will you put an your big coat, slip down to Reillaghan's, an' bring me word what came atween them at all; an' tell Owen himself the thruth, that this boy's breakin' our hearts by his coorses."

Micaul, who, although he knew the cause of the enmity between these rivals, was ignorant of that which occasioned his brother's rash oath, also felt anxious to ascertain the circumstances of the last quarrel. For this purpose, as well as in obedience to his father's wishes, he proceeded to Reillaghan's, and arrived just as Darby More and young Mike had set out for mass.

"What," said the mendicant, "can be bringin' Micaul down, I wondher? Somethin' about that slip o' grace, his brother."

"I suppose so," said Mike; "an' I wish the same slip was as dacent an' inoffensive as he is. I don't know a boy livin'

I'd go farther for nor the same Micaul. He's a credit to the family as much as the other's a stain upon them."

"Well, anyhow, you war Frank's match, an' more, last night. How bitther he was bint on bringin' Peggy aff, when he an' his set waited till they seen the country clear, an' thought the family asleep! Had you man for man, Mike?"

"Ay, about that; an' we set so snug in Peggy's that you'd hear a pin fallin'. A hard tug, too, there was in the beginnin'; but whin they found that we had a strong back they made away, an' we gave them purshute from about the house."

"You may thank me, anyhow, for havin' her to the good; but I knew by my dhrame, wid the help o' God, that there was somethin' to happen—by the same a-token that your mother's an the high horse about that dhrame. I'm to tell it to her, wid the sinse of it, in the evenin', when the day's past, an' all of us in comfort."

"What was it, Darby? Sure, you may let me hear it."

"Maybe I will in the evenin'. It was about you an' Peggy, the darlin'. But how will you manage in regard of breakin' the oath and sthrikin' a brother?"

"Why, that I couldn't get over it whin he struck me first. Sure, he's worse off. I'll lave it to the Diligates, an' whatever judgment they give out I'll take wid it."

"Well," observed Darby sarcastically, "it made him do one good turn, anyway."

"What was that, Darby? for good turns are but scarce wid him."

"Why, it made him hear mass to-day," replied the mendicant; "an' that's what he hadn't the grace to do this many a year. It's away in the mountains wid his gun he'd be thracin', an' a fine day it is for it—only this business prevints him. Now, Mike," observed Darby, "as we're comin' out upon the *boreen*, I'll fall back, an' do you go an. I have part of my *padareens* to say, before I get to the chapel, wid a blessin'; an' we had as good not be seen together."

The mendicant, as he spoke, pulled out a long pair of beads, on which he commenced his prayers, occasionally accosting an acquaintance with a *gho mhany Deah ghud*, and

sometimes taking a part in the conversation for a minute or two, after which he resumed the prayers as before.

The day was now brightening up, although the earlier part of the morning had threatened severe weather. Multitudes were flocking to the chapel; the men well secured in frieze greatcoats, in addition to which many of them had their legs bound with straw ropes, and others with leggings made of old hats cut up for the purpose. The women were secured with cloaks, the hoods of which were tied with kerchiefs of some showy colour over their bonnets or their caps, which, together with their elbows projecting behind, for the purpose of preventing their dress from being dabbled in the snow, gave them a marked and most picturesque appearance.

Reillaghan and M'Kenna both reached the chapel a considerable time before the arrival of the priest; and as a kind of Whiteboy committee was to sit for the purpose of investigating their conduct in holding out so dangerous an example as they did by striking each other, contrary to their oaths as brothers under the same system, they accordingly were occupied each in collecting his friends, and conciliating those whom they supposed to be hostile to them on the opposite party. It had been previously arranged that this committee should hold a court of inquiry, and that provided they could not agree, the matter was to be referred to two hedge schoolmasters, who should act as umpires; but if it happened that the latter could not decide it, there was no other tribunal appointed to which a final appeal could be made.

According to these regulations a court was opened in a *shebeen*-house that stood somewhat distant from the road. Twelve young fellows seated themselves on each side of a deal table, with one of the umpires at each end of it, and a bottle of whisky in the middle. In a higher sphere of life it is usual to refer such questionable conduct as occurs in duelling to the arbitration of those who are known to be qualified by experience in the duello. On this occasion the practice was not departed from, those who had been thus selected as the committee being the most notoriously pugnacious "boys" in the whole parish.

"Now, boys," said one of the schoolmasters, "let us proceed to operations wid proper spirit," and he filled a glass

of whisky as he spoke. "Here's all your healths; and next, pace and unanimity to us! Call in the culprits."

Both were accordingly admitted, and the first speaker resumed: "Now, in the second place, I'll read yees that part o' the oath which binds us all under the obligation of not strikin' one another—hem! hem!—'No brother is to strike another, knowing him to be such; he's to strike him —hem!—neither in fair nor market, at home nor abroad, neither in public nor in private, neither on Sunday nor week-day, present or absent, nor——"

"I condimn that," observed the other master. "I condimn it, as bein' too latitudinarian in principle, an' containing a paradogma; besides, it's bad grammar."

"You're rather airly in the market wid your bad grammar," replied the other. "I'll grant you the paradogma, but I'll stand up for the grammar of it while I'm able to stand up for anything."

"Faith, an' if you rise to stand up for that," replied his friend, "and doesn't choose to sit down till you prove it to be good grammar, you'll be a standin' joke all your life."

"I bleeve it's purty conspicuous in the parish that I have often, in our disputations about grammar, left you widout a leg to stand upon at all," replied the other.

This sally was well received, but his opponent was determined to push home the argument at once.

"I would be glad to know," he inquired, "by what beautiful invintion a man could contrive to strike another in his absence? Have you good grammar for that?"

"And did you never hear of detraction?" replied his opponent—"that is, a man who's in the habit of spaking falsehoods of his friends whin their backs are turned, that is to say, whin they are absent. Now, sure, if a man's absent whin his back's turned, mayn't any man whose back's turned be said to be absent; *ergo*, to strike a man behind his back is to strike him whin he's absent. Does that confound you? Where's your logic and grammar to meet proper ratiocination like what I'm displaying?"

"Faith," replied the other, "you may have had logic and grammar, but I'll take my oath it was in your younger years, for both have been absent ever since I knew you: they turned

their backs upon you, man alive; for they didn't like, you see, to be keepin' bad company—ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you poor crathur," said his antagonist, "if I choose to let myself out, I'd make a hare of you in no time, entirely."

"And an ass of yourself," retorted the other; "but you may save yourself the throuble in regard of the last, for your frinds know you to be an ass ever since they remimber you. You have them here, man alive—the auricles," and he pointed to his ears.

"Hut! get out wid you, you poor Jamaica-headed castigator, you; sure, you never had more nor a thimbleful o' sinse on any subject."

"Faith, an' the thimble that measured yours was a tailor's one widout a bottom in it, an' good measure you got, you miserable flagellator! what are you but a *nux vomica!* A fit o' the ague's a thrifle compared to your asinity."

The "boys" were delighted at this encounter, and utterly forgetful of the pacific occasion on which they had assembled, began to pit them against each other with great glee.

"That's a hard hit, Misther Costigan; but you won't let it pass, anyhow."

"The ague an' you are ould acquaintances," retorted Costigan; "whenever a scrimmage takes place, you're sure to resave a visit from it."

"Why, I'm not such a haro as yourself," replied his rival, "nor such a great hand at batin' the absent!"

"Bravo, Misther Connell! that's a leveller. Come, Misther Costigan, bedad, if you don't answer that you're bate."

"By this and by that, man alive, if you don't mend your manners, maybe I'd make it betther for you to be absent also. You'll only put me to the throuble of mendin' them for you."

"Mend my manners!" exclaimed his opponent, with a bitter sneer—"you to mend them! Out wid your budget and your hammer, then. You're the very tinker of good manners—bekase for one dacency you'd mend, you'd spoil twenty."

"I'm able to hammer you, at all events, or, for that matther, any one of your illiterate gineration. Sure, it's

well known that you can't tache Vosther [1] widout the kay."

"Hould there, if you plase," exclaimed one of his opponent's relations; "don't lug in his family; that's known to be somewhat afore your own, I bleeve. There's no informers among them, Misther Costigan — keep at home, masther, if you plase."

"At home! that's more than some o' your own *cleaveens* have been able to do," rejoined Costigan, alluding to one of the young fellow's acquaintances who had been transported.

"Do you mane to put an affront upon me?" said the other.

"Since the *barrhad* fits you, wear it," replied Costigan.

"Very right, masther, make him a present of it," exclaimed one of Costigan's distant relations; "he desarves that, an' more if he'd get it."

"Do I?" said the other. "An' what have *you* to say on the head of it?"

"Why, not much," answered Bartle, "only that you ought to've left it betune them; an' that *I'll* back Misther Costigan agin any rascal that ud say there was ever a drop of his blood in an informer's veins."

"*I* say it, for one," replied the other.

"And I, for another," said Connell; "an', what's worse, I'll hould a wager that if he was searched this minute you'd find a kay to Gough in his pocket, although he throws Vosther in my teeth—the dunce never goes widout one. Sure, he's not able to set a dacent copy, or headline, or to make a dacent hook, nor a hanger, nor a down-stroke, and was a poor scholar, too!"

"I'll give you a down-stroke in the manetime, you ignoramus," said the pedagogue, throwing himself to the end of the table at which his enemy sat, and laying him along the floor by a single blow.

He was instantly attacked by the friend of the prostrate academician, who was in his turn attacked by the friend of Costigan. The adherents of the respective teachers were

[1] Elias Voster's "Arithmetic" was the only serious rival to Gough's in Ireland at this time.—ED.

immediately rushing to a general engagement, when the door opened, and Darby More made his appearance.

"Asy!—stop wid yees!—hould back, ye disgraceful villains!" exclaimed the mendicant, in a thundering voice—"be asy, I say. Saints in glory! is this the way you're settling the dispute between the two dacent young men, that's sorry, both o' them, I'll go bail, for what they done. Sit down, every one of yees, or, by the blessed ordhers I wear about me, I'll report yees to Father Hoolaghan, an' have yees read out from the althar, or sint to Lough Derg! Sit down I say!"

As he spoke he extended his huge cant between the hostile parties, and thrust them one by one to their seats with such muscular energy that he had them sitting before another blow could be given.

"Saints in glory!" he exclaimed again, "isn't this blessed doins an the sacred day that's in it, that a poor, helpless ould man like me can't come to get somethin' to take away this misfortunit touch o' configuration that I'm afflicted wid in cowld weather—that I can't take a little sup of the only thing that cures me, widout your ructions and battles! You came here to make pace between two dacent men's childher, and you're as bad, if not worse, yourselves. Oh, *murrah dheelish*, what's this! I'm in downright agony! Oh, murdher *sheery!* Has none o' yees a hand to thry if there's e'er a dhrop of relief in that bottle? or am I to die all out, in the face o' the world, for want of a sup o' something to warm me?"

"Darby, thry the horn," said M'Kenna.

"Here, Darby," said one of them, "dhrink this off, an' my life for yours, it'll warm you to the marrow!"

"Och, *musha*, but I wanted it badly," replied Darby, swallowing it at once; "it's the only thing does me good when I'm this way. *Dhea grasthias!* [1] Oxis Doxis Glorioxis, Amin!"

"I think," said M'Kenna, "that what's in the horn's far afore it."

"Oh, thin, you thoughtless crathur, if you knew somethin' I hard about you a while ago, you'd think otherwise. But

[1] *Deo gratias.*

indeed it's thrue for you; I'm sure I'd be sarry to compare what's in it to anything o' the kind I tuck. *Dhea grasthias!* throth, I'm asier now a great dale nor I was."

"Will you take another sup, Darby?" inquired the young fellow in whose hands the bottle was now nearly empty; "there's jist about another glass."

"Indeed an' I will, *a villish!* an' sure you'll have my blessin' for it, and barrin' the priest's own, you couldn't have a more luckier one, blessed be God for it—sure, that's well known. In throth, they never came to ill that had it, an' never did good that got my curse! Houp!—do you hear how that rises the wind off my stomach? Houp!—*Dhea grasthias* for that!"

"How did you larn all the prayers an' charms you have, Darby?" inquired the bottle-holder.

"It would take me too long to tell you that, *a villish!* But, childher, now that you're all together, make it up wid one another. Aren't you all frinds an' brothers, sworn brothers, an' why would you be fightin' among other? Misther Costigan, give me your hand; sure, I heard a thrifle o' what you were sayin' while I was suckin' my *dudeen* at the fire widout. Come here, Misther Connell. Now, before the saints in glory, I lay my bitther curse an him that refuses to shake hands wid his inimy. There now—I'm proud to see it. Mike, *avourneen*, come here—Frank M'Kenna, *gutsho*, walk over here; my bitther heart's curse upon both of yees if you don't make up all quarrels this minnit! Are you willin', Mike Reillaghan?"

"I have no objection in life," replied Mike, "if he'll say that Peggy Gartland won't be put to any more throuble through his manes."

"There's my hand, Mike," said Frank, "that I forget an' forgive all that's past; an' in regard o' Peggy Gartland, why, as she's so dark agin me, I lave her to you for good."

"Well! see what it is to have the good intintions!—to be makin' pace an' friendship atween inimies! That's all I think about, an' nothin' gives me greater pleas—— Saints o' glory!—what's this!—oh, *wurrah!*—that thief of a—*wurrah dheelish!*—that touch o' configuration's comin' back agin!—oh, thin, but it's hard to get it undher!—oh!——"

"I'm sarry for it, Darby," replied he who held the now empty bottle, "for the whisky's out."

"Throth, and I'm sarry myself, for nothin' else does me good; an' Father Hoolaghan says nothin' can keep it down, barrin' the sup o' whisky. It's best burnt wid a little bit o' butther an it; but I can't get that always, it overtakes me so suddenly. Glory be to God!"

"Well," said M'Kenna, "as Mike an' myself was the manes of bringin' us together, why, if he joins me, we'll have another bottle."

"Throth, an' it's fair an' dacent, an' he must do it; by the same a-token, that I'll not lave the house till it's dhrunk, for there's no thrustin' yees together, you're so hot-headed an' ready to rise the hand," said Darby.

M'Kenna and Mike, having been reconciled, appeared in a short time warmer friends than ever. While the last bottle went round, those who had before been on the point of engaging in personal conflict now laughed at their own foibles, and expressed the kindness and goodwill which they felt for each other at heart.

"Now," said the mendicant, "go all of you to mass, an' as soon as you can to confission, for it's not good to have the broken oath an' the sin of it over one. Confiss it, an' have your consciences light; sure, it's a happiness that you can have the guilt taken off o' yees, childher."

"Thrue for you, Darby," they replied; "an' we'll be thinkin' of your advice."

"Ay, do, childher; an' there's Father Hoolaghan comin' down the road, so, in the name o' goodness, we haven't a minnit to lose."

They all left the shebeen-house as he spoke, except Frank and himself, who remained until they had gone out of hearing.

"Darby," said he, "I want you to come up to our house in the mornin', an' bring along wid you the things that you stamp the crass upon the skin wid; I'm goin' to get the crucifix put upon me; but, on the paril o' your life, don't brathe a word of it to mortual."

"God enable you, *avick!* it's a good intintion. I will indeed be up wid you—airly, too, wid a blessin'. It is that, indeed—a good intintion, sure enough."

The parish chapel was about one hundred perches from the shebeen-house in which the "boys" had assembled; the latter were proceeding there in a body when Frank overtook them.

"Mike," said he, aside to Reillaghan, "we'll have time enough—walk back a bit. I'll tell you what I'm thinkin'; you never seen in your life a finer day for thracin'; what ud you say if we give the boys the slip, never heed mass, an' set off to the mountains?"

"Won't we have time enough afther mass?" said Reillaghan.

"Why, man, sure, you did hear mass once to-day. Weren't you at it last night? No, indeed, we won't be time enough afther it; for this bein' Chris'mas day, we must be home at dinner-time—you know it's not lucky to be from the family upon set days. Hang-an-ounty, come; we'll have fine sport; I have cock-sticks [1] enough. The best part of the day'll be gone if we wait for mass. Come, an' let us start."

"Well, well," replied Reillaghan, "the sarra hair I care; so let us go. I'd like myself to have a rap at the hares in the Black Hills, sure enough; but as it ud be remarkable for us to be seen lavin' mass, why, let us crass the field here, an' get out upon the road above the bridge."

To this his companion assented, and they both proceeded at a brisk pace, each apparently anxious for the sport, and resolved to exhibit such a frank cordiality of manner as might convince the other that all their past enmity was forgotten and forgiven.

Their direct path to the mountains lay by M'Kenna's house, where it was necessary they should call, in order to furnish themselves with cock-sticks and to bring dogs, which young Frank kept for the purpose. The inmates of the family were at mass, with the exception of Frank's mother, and Rody, the servant man, whom they found sitting on his own bed in the barn, engaged at cards, the right hand against the left.

"Well, Rody," said Frank, "who's winnin'?"

[1] A stick which was thrown at a cock tied to a stake, a game practised by the people on a day known as "Cock-Monday."—Ed.

"The left entirely," replied his companion; "the divil a game at all the right's gettin', whatever's the rason of it, an' I'm always turnin' up black. I hope none of my frinds or acquaintances will die soon."

"Throw them aside—quit of them," said Frank; "give them to me, I'll put them past, an' do you bring us out the gun. I've the powdher an' shot here; we may as well bring her, an' have a slap at them. One o' the officers in the barracks of —— keeps me in powdher an' shot, besides givin' me an odd crown, an' I keep him in game."

"Why, thin, boys," observed Rody, "what's the manin' o' this?—two o' the biggest inimies in Europe last night an' this mornin', an' now as great as two thieves! How does that come?"

"Very asy, Rody," replied Reillaghan; "we made up the quarrel, shuck hands, an's good frinds as ever."

"Bedad, that bates cock-fightin'," said Rody, as he went to bring in the gun.

In the meantime, Frank, with the cards in his hand, went to the eave of the barn, thrust them up under the thatch, and took out of the same nook a flask of whisky.

"We'll want this," said he, putting it to his lips and gulping down a portion. "Come, Mike, be tastin'; an' afterwards put this in your pocket."

Mike followed his example, and was corking the flask when Rody returned with the gun.

"She's charged," said Frank; "but we'd betther put in fresh primin' for fraid of her hangin' fire."

He then primed the gun, and handed it to Reillaghan. "Do you keep the gun, Mike," he added, "an' I'll keep the cock-sticks. Rody, I'll bet you a shillin' I kill more wid a cock-stick nor he will wid the gun. Will you take me up?"

"I know a safer thrick," replied Rody. "You're a dead aim wid the cock-stick, sure enough, an' a deader aim wid the gun, too—catch me at it."

"You show some sinse, for a wondher," observed Frank, as he and his companion left the barn, and turned towards the mountain, which rose frowning behind the house.

Rody stood looking after them until they wound up slowly out of sight among the hills; he then shook his head two or

three times, and exclaimed, "By dad, there's somethin' in this, if one could make out what it is. I know Frank."

Christmas Day passed among the peasantry as it usually passes in Ireland. Friends met before dinner in their own, in their neighbours', in shebeen or in public houses, where they drank, sang, or fought, according to their natural dispositions, or the quantity of liquor they had taken. The festivity of the day might be known by the unusual reek of smoke that danced from each chimney, by the number of persons who crowded the roads by their brand-new dresses —for if a young man or country girl can afford a dress at all, they provide it for Christmas—and by the striking appearance of those who, having drunk a little too much, were staggering home in the purest happiness, singing, stopping their friends, shaking hands with them, or kissing them without any regard to sex. Many a time might be seen two Irishmen, who had got drunk together, leaving a fair or market, their arms about each other's necks, from whence they only removed them to kiss and hug one another the more lovingly. Notwithstanding this, there is nothing more probable than that these identical two will enjoy the luxury of a mutual battle, by way of episode, and again proceed on their way, kissing and hugging as if nothing had happened to interrupt their friendship. All the usual effects of jollity and violence, fun and fighting, love and liquor, were, of course, to be seen, felt, heard, and understood on this day, in a manner much more remarkable than on common occasions; for it may be observed that the national festivals of the Irish bring out their strongest points of character with peculiar distinctness.

The family of Frank M'Kenna were sitting down to their Christmas dinner; the good man had besought a blessing upon the comfortable and abundant fare of which they were about to partake, and nothing was amiss, save the absence of their younger son.

"*Musha,* where on earth can this boy be stayin'?" said the father. "I'm sure this above all days in the year is one he oughtn't to be from home an."

The mother was about to inform him of the son's having gone to the mountains, when the latter returned, breathless, pale, and horror-struck.

Rody eyed him keenly, and laid down the bit he was conveying to his mouth.

"Heavens above us!" exclaimed his mother, "what ails you?"

He only replied by dashing his hat on the ground, and exclaiming, "Up wid yees!—up wid yees!—quit your dinners! Oh, Rody! what'll be done? Go down to Owen Reillaghan's—go 'way—go down—and tell thim—oh, *vick-na-hoie!* but this was the unfortunate day to us all! Mike Reillaghan is shot wid my gun; she went off in his hand goin' over a snow wreath, an' he's lying dead in the mountains!"

The screams and the wailings which immediately rose in the family were dreadful. Mrs. M'Kenna almost fainted; and the father, after many struggles to maintain his firmness, burst into the bitter tears of disconsolation and affliction. Rody was calmer, but turned his eyes from one to another with a look of deep compassion, and again eyed Frank keenly and suspiciously.

Frank's eye caught his, and the glance which had surveyed him with such scrutiny did not escape his observation. "Rody," said he, "do you go an' break it to the Reillaghans: you're the best to do it; for, when we were settin' out, you saw that he carried the gun, an' not me."

"Thrue for you," said Rody; "I saw that, Frank, and can swear to it; but that's all I did see. I know nothing of what happened in the mountains."

"*Damnho seery orth!* What do you mane, you villain?" exclaimed Frank, seizing the tongs, and attempting to strike him. "Do you dar to suspect that I had any hand in it?"

"*Wurrah dheelish,* Frank!" screamed the sisters, "are you goin' to murdher Rody?"

"Murdher!" he shouted, in a paroxysm of fury; "why, the curse o' God upon you all, what puts murdher into your heads? Is it my own family that's the first to charge me wid it?"

"Why, there's no one chargin' you wid it," replied Rody—"not one. Whatever makes you take it to yourself?"

"An' what did you look at me for, thin, the way you did? What did you look at me for, I say?"

"Is it any wondher," replied the servant coolly, "when you had sich a dreadful story to tell?"

"Go off," replied Frank, now hoarse with passion—"go off, an' tell the Reillaghans what happened; but, by all the books that ever was opened or shut, if you breathe a word about murdh—about—if you do, you villain, I'll be the death o' you!"

When Rody was gone on this melancholy errand, old M'Kenna first put the tongs, and everything he feared might be used as a weapon by his frantic son, out of his reach; he then took down the book on which he had the night before sworn so rash and mysterious an oath, and desired the son to look upon it.

"Frank," said he solemnly, "you swore on that blessed book last night that Mike Reillaghan never would be the husband of Peggy Gartland—he's a corpse to-day! Yes," he continued, "the good, the honest, the industrious boy is—" his sobs became so loud and thick that he appeared almost suffocated. "Oh," said he, "may God pity us! As I hope to meet my blessed Saviour, who was born on this day, I would rather you war the corpse, an' not Mike Reillaghan!"

"I don't doubt that," said the son fiercely; "you never showed me much *grah*, sure enough."

"Did you ever desarve it?" replied the father. "Heaven above me knows it was too much kindness was showed you. When you ought to have been well corrected, you got your will an' your way, an' now see the upshot."

"Well," said the son, "it's the last day ever I'll stay in the family; thrate me as bad as you plase. I'll take the king's bounty an' list, if I live to see to-morrow."

"Oh, thin, in the name o' goodness, do so," said the father; "an' so far from previntin' you, we'll bless you when you're gone, for goin'."

"*Arrah*, Frank, *aroon*," said Mrs. M'Kenna, who was now recovered, "maybe, afther all, it was only an accident; sure, we often hard of sich things. Don't you remimber Squire Elliott's son, that shot himself by accident, out fowlin'? Frank, can you clear yourself afore us?"

"Oh, Alley! Alley!" exclaimed the father, wiping away his tears, "don't you remimber his oath last night?"

"What oath?" inquired the son, with an air of surprise;

"what oath last night? I know I was dhrunk last night, but I reminber nothing about an oath."

"Do you deny it, you hardened boy?"

"I do deny it; an' I'm not a hardened boy. What do you all mane? do yees want to dhrive me mad? I know nothin' about any oath last night," replied the son, in a loud voice.

The grief of the mother and daughters was loud during the pauses of the conversation. Micaul, the eldest son, sat beside his father in tears.

"Frank," said he, "many an advice I gave you between ourselves, and you know how you tuck them. When you'd stale the oats, an' the meal, an' the phaties, an' hay, at night, to have money for your cards an' dhrinkin', I kept it back, an' said nothin' about it. I wish I hadn't done so, for it wasn't for your good; but it was my desire to have as much pace and quietness as possible."

"Frank," said the father, eyeing him solemnly, "it's possible that you do forget the oath you made last night, for you war in liquor; I would give the wide world that it was thrue. Can you now, in the presence of God, clear yourself of havin' act or part in the death of Mike Reillaghan?"

"What ud ail me," said the son, "if I liked?"

"Will you do it now for our satisfaction, an' take a load of misery off of our hearts? It's the laste you may do, if you can do it. In the presence of the great God, will you clear yourself now?"

"I suppose," said the son, "I'll have to clear myself to-morrow, an' there's no use in my doin' it more than wanst. When the time comes I'll do it."

The father put his hands on his eyes, and groaned aloud; so deep was his affliction that the tears trickled through his fingers during this fresh burst of sorrow. The son's refusal to satisfy them renewed the grief of all, as well as of the father; it rose again, louder than before, whilst young Frank sat opposite the door, silent and sullen.

It was now dark, but the night was calm and agreeable. M'Kenna's family felt the keen affliction which we have endeavoured to describe. The dinner was put hastily aside, and the festive spirit peculiar to this night became changed into one of gloom and sorrow. In this state they sat, when

the voice of grief was heard loud in the distance—the strong cry of men, broken and abrupt, mingled with the shrieking wail of female lamentation.

The M'Kennas started, and Frank's countenance assumed an expression which it would be difficult to describe. There was, joined to his extreme paleness, a restless, apprehensive, and determined look; each trait apparently struggling for the ascendency in his character, and attempting to stamp his face with its own expression.

"Do you hear that?" said his father. "Oh, *musha*, Father of Heaven, look down an' support that family this night! Frank, if you take my advice you'll lave their sight; for surely if they brained you on the spot who could blame them?"

"Why ought I lave their sight?" replied Frank. "I tell you all that I had no hand in his death. The gun went off by accident as he was crassin' a wreath o' snow. I was afore him, and when I heard the report, an' turned round, there he lay, shot an' bleedin'. I thought it mightn't signify, but on lookin' at him closely I found him quite dead. I then ran home, never touchin' the gun at all, till his family an' the neighbours ud see him. Surely, it's no wondher I'd be distracted in my mind; but that's no rason you should all open upon me, as if I had murdhered the boy!"

"Well," said the father, "I'm glad to hear you say even that much. I hope it may be betther wid you than we all think; an' oh! grant it, sweet Mother o' Heaven, this day! Now carry yourself quietly afore the people. If they abuse you, don't fly into a passion, but make allowance for their grief and misery."

In the meantime the tumult was deepening as it approached M'Kenna's house. The report had almost instantly spread through the village in which Reillaghan lived; and the loud cries of his father and brothers, who, in the wildness of their despair, continually called upon his name, had been heard at the houses which lay scattered over the neighbourhood. Their inmates, on listening to such unusual sounds, sought the direction from which they proceeded; for it was quite evident that some terrible calamity had befallen the Reillaghans in consequence of the son's name being borne on the

blasts of night with such loud and overwhelming tones of grief and anguish. The assembly, on reaching M'Kenna's, might therefore be numbered at thirty, including the females of Reillaghan's immediate family, who had been strung by the energy of despair to a capability of bearing any fatigue, or, rather, to an utter insensibility of all bodily suffering.

We must leave the scene which ensued to the reader's imagination, merely observing that as neither the oath which young Frank had taken the preceding night, nor, indeed, the peculiar bitterness of his enmity towards the deceased, was known by the Reillaghans, they did not, therefore, discredit the account of his death which they had heard.

Their grief was exclamatory and full of horror; consisting of prolonged shrieks on the part of the women, and frantic howlings on that of the men. The only words they uttered were his name, with epithets and ejaculations. "*Oh, a Vichaul dheelish—a Vichaul dheelish—a bouchal ban machree—wuill thu marra?—wuill thu marra?*" "Oh, Michael, the beloved—Michael, the beloved—fair boy of our heart—are you dead?—are you dead?"

From M'Kenna's the crowd, at the head of which was Darby More, proceeded towards the mountains, many of them bearing torches, such as had been used on their way to the Midnight Mass. The moon had disappeared, the darkness was deepening, and the sky was overhung with black, heavy clouds, that gave a stormy character to scenery in itself remarkably wild and gloomy.

Young M'Kenna and the pilgrim led them to the dreary waste in which the corpse lay. It was certainly an awful spectacle to behold these unhappy people toiling up the mountain solitude at such an hour, their convulsed faces thrown into striking relief by the light of the torches, and their cries rising in wild, irregular cadences upon the blast which swept over them with a dismal howl, in perfect character with their affliction and the circumstances which produced it.

On arriving within view of the corpse there was a slight pause; for, notwithstanding the dreadful paroxysms of their grief, there was something still more startling and terrible in contemplating the body thus stretched out in the stillness

of death on the lonely mountain. The impression it produced was peculiarly solemn: the grief was hushed for a moment, but only for a moment; it rose again wilder than before, and in a few minutes the friends of Reillaghan were about to throw themselves upon the body under the strong impulse of sorrow and affection.

The mendicant, however, stepped forward. "Hould back," said he; "it's hard to ax yees to do it, but still you must. Let the neighbours about us here examine the body, in ordher to see whether it mightn't be possible that the dacent boy came by his death from somebody else's hand than his own. Hould forrid the lights," said he, "till we see how he's lyin' an' how the gun's lyin'."

"Darby," said young Frank, "I can't but be oblaged to you for that. You're the last man livin' ought to say what you said, afther you seein' us both forget an' forgive this day. I call upon you now to say whether you didn't see him an' me shakin' hands, an' buryin' all bad feelin' between us?"

"I'll spake to you jist now," replied the mendicant. "See here, neighbours—obsarve this: the boy was shot in the breast, an' here's not a snow-wreath, but a *weeshy* dhrift that a child ud step acrass widout an accident. I tell yees all that I suspect foul play in this."

"H——'s fire!" exclaimed the brother of the deceased; "what's that you say? What? Can it be—can it—can it—that you murdhered him, you villain, that's known to be nothin' but a villain? But I'll do for you!" He snatched at the gun as he spoke, and would probably have taken ample vengeance upon Frank had not the mendicant and others prevented him.

"Have sinse," said Darby; "this is not the way to behave, man. Lave the gun lyin' where she is till we see more about us. Stand back there, an' let me look at these marks—ay, about five yards—there's the track of feet about five yards before him—here they turn about an' go back. Here, Saviour o' the world! see here! the mark, clane an' clear, of the butt o' the gun! Now, if that boy stretched afore us had the gun in his hand the time she went off, could the mark of it be here? Bring me down the gun—an' the curse

o' God upon her for an unlucky thief, whoever had her! It's thrue!—it's too thrue!" he continued—"the man that had the gun stood on this spot!"

"It's a falsity!" said Frank—"it's a damnable falsity! Rody Teague, I call upon you to spake for me. Didn't you see, when we went to the hills, that it was Mike carried the gun, an' not me?"

"I did," replied Rody; "I can swear to that."

"Ay," exclaimed Frank, with triumph, "an' you yourself, Darby, saw us, as I said, makin' up whatsomever little difference there was betwixt us."

"I did," replied the mendicant sternly; "but I heard you say, no longer ago than last night—say! why, you shwore it, man alive!—that if you wouldn't have Peggy Gartland, he never should. In your own stable I heard it, an' I was the manes of disappointing you and your gang when you thought to take away the girl by force. You're well known too often to carry a fair face when the heart under it is black wid you."

"All I can say is," observed young Reillaghan, "that if it comes out agin you that you played him foul, all the earth won't save your life. I'll have your heart's blood, if I should hang for it a thousand times."

This dialogue was frequently interrupted by the sobbings and clamour of the women, and the detached conversation of some of the men, who were communicating to each other their respective opinions upon the melancholy event which had happened.

Darby More now brought Reillaghan's father aside, and thus addressed him :—

"*Gluntho!*—to tell God's thruth, I've strong suspicions that your son was murdhered. This sacred thing, that I put the crass upon people's breasts wid, saves people from hangin' an' unnatural deaths. Frank spoke to me last night, no longer ago, to come up an' mark it an him to-morrow. My opinion is that he intinded to murdher him at that time, an' wanted to have a protection agin what might happen to him in regard o' the black deed."

"Can we prove it agin him?" inquired the disconsolate father. "I know it'll be hard, as there was no one present but themselves; an' if he did it, surely he'll not confess it."

"We may make him do it, maybe," said the mendicant. "The villain's aisily frightened, an' fond o' charms an' *pish-throgues*, an' sich holy things, for all his wickedness. Don't say a word. We'll take him by surprise. I'll call upon him to TOUCH THE CORPSE. Make them women—an' och, it's hard to expect it—make them stop clappin' their hands an' cryin'; an' let there be dead silence, if you can."

During this and some other observations made by Darby, Frank had got the gun in his possession, and whilst seeming to be engaged in looking at it and examining the lock, he actually contrived to reload it without having been observed.

"Now, neighbours," said Darby, "hould your tongues for a *weeshy* start, till I ax Frank M'Kenna a question or two. Frank M'Kenna, as you hope to meet God at judgment, did you take his life that's lyin' a corpse before us?"

"I did not," replied M'Kenna; "I could clear myself on all the books in Europe, that he met his death as I tould yees; an' more nor that," he added, dropping upon his knees and uncovering his head, "MAY I DIE WIDOUT PRIEST OR PRAYER, WIDOUT HELP, HOPE, OR HAPPINESS, UPON THE SPOT WHERE HE'S NOW STRETCHED, IF I MURDHERED OR SHOT HIM."

"I say amin to that," replied Darby. "Oxis Doxis Glori-oxis! So far, that's right, if the blood of him's not an you. But there's one thing more to be done: will you walk over, UNDHER THE EYE OF GOD, AN' TOUCH THE CORPSE? Hould back, neighbours, an' let him come over alone; I an' Owen Reillaghan will stand here wid the lights to see if the corpse bleeds."

"Give me, too, a light," said M'Kenna's father; "my son must get fair play, anyway; I must be a witness myself to it, an' will, too."

"It's but rasonable," said Owen Reillaghan. "Come over beside Darby an' myself; I'm willin' that your son should stand or fall by what'll happen."

Frank's father, with a taper in his hand, immediately went, with a pale face and trembling steps, to the place appointed for him beside the corpse, where he took his stand.

When young M'Kenna heard Darby's last question he seemed as if seized by an inward spasm; the start which he gave, and his gaspings for breath, were visible to all present.

Had he seen the spirit of the murdered man before him his horror could not have been greater; for this ceremony had been considered a most decisive test in cases of suspicion of murder—an ordeal, indeed, to which few murderers wished to submit themselves. In addition to this, we may observe that Darby's knowledge of the young man's character was correct: with all his crimes he was weak-minded and superstitious.

He stood silent for some time after the ordeal had been proposed to him; his hair became literally erect with the dread of this formidable scrutiny, his cheeks turned white, and the cold perspiration fell from him in large drops. All his strength appeared to have departed from him; he stood as if hesitating, and even the energy necessary to stand seemed to be the result of an effort.

"Remember," said Darby, pulling out the large crucifix which was attached to his beads, "that the eye of God is upon you. If you've committed the murdher, thrimble; if not, Frank, you've little to fear in touchin' the corpse."

Frank had not yet uttered a word; but leaning himself on the gun, he looked wildly around him, cast his eyes up to the stormy sky, then turned them with a dead glare upon the corpse and the crucifix.

"Do you confiss the murdher?" said Darby.

"Murdher!" rejoined Frank; "no, I confess no murdher. You villain, do you want to make me guilty? do you want to make me guilty, you deep villain?"

It seemed as if the current of his thoughts and feelings had taken a new direction, though it is probable that the excitement which appeared to be rising within him was only the courage of fear.

"You all wish to find me guilty," he added; "but I'll show yees that I'm not guilty."

He immediately walked towards the corpse, and stooping down, touched the body with one hand, holding the gun in the other. The interest of that moment was intense, and all eyes were strained towards the spot. Behind the corpse, at each shoulder—for the body lay against a small snow wreath, in a recumbent position—stood the father of the deceased and the father of the accused, each wound up by feelings of

a directly opposite character to a pitch of dreadful excitement. Over them, in his fantastic dress and white beard, stood the tall mendicant, who held up his crucifix to Frank, with an awful menace upon his strongly-marked countenance. At a little distance to the left of the body stood the other men who were assembled, having their torches held aloft in their hands, and their forms bent towards the corpse, their faces indicating expectation, dread, and horror. The female relations of the deceased stood nearest his remains, their torches extended in the same direction, their visages exhibiting the passions of despair and grief in their wildest characters, but as if arrested by some supernatural object immediately before their eyes that produced a new and more awful feeling than grief. When the body was touched, Frank stood as if himself bound by a spell to the spot. At length he turned his eyes to the mendicant, who stood silent and motionless, with the crucifix still extended in his hand.

"Are you satisfied now?" said he.

"That's wanst," said the pilgrim; "you're to touch it three times."

Frank hesitated a moment, but immediately stooped again, and touched it twice in succession; but it remained still and unchanged as before. His father broke the silence by a fervent ejaculation of thanksgiving to God for the vindication of his son's character which he had just witnessed.

"Now!" exclaimed M'Kenna, in a loud, exulting tone, "you all see that I did not murdher him!"

"You DID!" said a voice, which was immediately recognised to be that of the deceased.

M'Kenna shrieked aloud, and immediately fled with his gun towards the mountains, pursued by Reillaghan's other son. The crowd rushed in towards the body, whilst sorrow, affright, and wonder marked the extraordinary scene which ensued.

"Queen o' Heaven!" exclaimed old M'Kenna, "who could believe this only they hard it!"

"The murdher wouldn't lie!" shrieked out Mrs. Reillaghan—"the murdher wouldn't lie!—the blood o' my darlin' son spoke it!—his blood spoke it, or God or His angel spoke it for him!"

"It's beyant anything ever known," some exclaimed, "to

come back an' tell the deed upon his murdherer! God presarve us an' save us this night! I wish we wor at home out o' this wild place!"

Others said they had heard of such things; but this, having happened before their eyes, surpassed anything that could be conceived.

The mendicant now advanced, and once more mysteriously held up his crucifix.

"Keep silence!" said he, in a solemn, sonorous voice. "Keep silence, I say, an' kneel down, all o' yees, before what I've in my hand. If you want to know who or what the voice came from, I can tell yees—IT WAS THE CRUCIFIX THAT SPOKE!"

This communication was received with a feeling of devotion too deep for words. His injunction was instantly complied with: they knelt and bent down in worship before it in the mountain wilds.

"Ay," said he, "little yees know the virtues of that crucifix! It was consecrated by a friar so holy that it was well known there was but the shadow of him upon the earth, the other part of him bein' night an' day in heaven among the archangels. It shows the power of this crass, anyway; an' you may tell your frinds that I'll sell bades touched wid it to the faithful at sixpence apiece. They can be put an your *padareens* as dicades,[1] wid a blessin'. Oxis Doxis Glorioxis, Amin! Let us now bear the corpse home, antil it's dressed an' laid out dacently, as it ought to be."

The body was then placed upon an easy litter, formed of greatcoats buttoned together, and supported by the strongest men present, who held it one or two at each corner. In this manner they advanced at a slow pace until they reached Owen Reillaghan's house, where they found several of the country people assembled waiting for their return.

It was not until the body had been placed in an inner room, where none were admitted until it should be laid out, that the members of the family first noticed the prolonged absence of Reillaghan's other son. The moment it had been alluded to they were seized with new alarm and consternation.

[1] Each ten prayers is a "decade."—ED.

"*Hanim an diouol!*" said Reillaghan bitterly, in Irish, "but I doubt the red-handed villain has cut short the lives of two brave sons. I only hope he may stop in the counthry; I'm not widout frinds an' followers that ud think it no sin in a just cause to pay him in his own coin, an' to take from him an' his a pound o' blood for every ounce of ours they shed."

A number of his friends instantly volunteered to retrace their way to the mountains and search for the other son. "There's little danger of his life," said a relation; "it's a short time Frank ud stand him, particularly as the gun wasn't charged. We'll go, at any rate, for fraid he might lose himself in the mountains or walk into some o' the lochs on his way home. We had as good bring some whisky wid us, for he may want it badly."

While they had been speaking, however, the snow began to fall, and the wind to blow in a manner that promised a heavy and violent storm. They proceeded, notwithstanding, on their search, and, on whistling for the dog, discovered that he was not to be found.

"He went wid us to the mountains, I know," said the former speaker; "an' I think it likely he'll be found wid Owen, wherever he is. Come, boys, step out. It's a dismal night, anyway, the Lord knows — och, och!" And with sorrowful but vigorous steps they went in quest of the missing brother.

Nothing but the preternatural character of the words which were so mysteriously pronounced immediately before Owen's pursuit of M'Kenna could have prevented that circumstance, together with the flight of the latter, from exciting greater attention among the crowd. His absence, however, now that they had time to reflect on it, produced unusual alarm, not only on account of M'Kenna's bad character, but from the apprehension of Owen being lost in the mountains.

The inextinguishable determination of revenge with which an Irishman pursues any person who, either directly or indirectly, takes the life of a near relation, or invades the peace of his domestic affections, was strongly illustrated by the nature of Owen's pursuit after M'Kenna, considering the appalling circumstances under which he undertook it. It is certainly more than probable that M'Kenna, instead of flying,

would have defended himself with the loaded gun, had not his superstitious fears been excited by the words which so mysteriously charged him with the murder. The direction he accidentally took led both himself and his pursuer into the wildest recesses of the mountains. The chase was close and desperate, and certainly might have been fatal to Reillaghan had M'Kenna thought of using the gun. His terror, however, exhausted him, and overcame his presence of mind to such a degree that, so far from using the weapon in his defence, he threw it aside, in order to gain ground upon his pursuer. This he did but slowly, and the pursuit was as yet uncertain. At length Owen found the distance between himself and his brother's murderer increasing; the night was dark, and he himself feeble and breathless; he therefore gave over all hope of securing him, and returned to follow those who had accompanied him to the spot where his brother's body lay. It was when retracing his path that the nature of his situation occurred to him. The snow had not begun to fall, but the appearance of the sky was strongly calculated to depress him.

Every person knows with what remarkable suddenness snow-storms descend. He had scarcely advanced homewards more than twenty minutes, when the grey tempest spread its dusky wings over the heavens, and a darker shade rapidly settled upon the white hills—now becoming indistinct in the gloom of the air, which was all in commotion, and groaned aloud with the noise of the advancing storm. When he saw the deep gloom, and felt the chilling coldness pierce his flesh so bitterly, he turned himself in the direction which led by the shortest possible cut towards his father's house. He was at this time nearly three miles from any human habitation; and as he looked into the darkness his heart began to palpitate with an alarm almost bordering on hopelessness. His dog, which had, up till this boding change, gone on before him, now partook in his master's apprehensions, and trotted anxiously at his feet.

In the meantime the winds howled in a melancholy manner along the mountains, and carried with them from the upper clouds the rapidly descending sleet. The storm current, too, was against him, and as the air began to work in dark

confusion, he felt for the first time how utterly helpless a thing he was under the fierce tempest in this dreadful solitude.

At length the rushing sound which he first heard in the distance approached him in all its terrors; and in a short time he was staggering like a drunken man under the incessant drifts which swept over him and about him. Nothing could exceed the horrors of the atmosphere at this moment. From the surface of the earth the whirlwinds swept immense snow-clouds that rose up instantaneously, and shot off along the brows and ravines of the solitary wild, sometimes descending into the valleys, and again rushing up the almost perpendicular sides of the mountains, with a speed, strength, and noise that mocked at everything possessing life; whilst in the air the tumult and the darkness continued to deepen in the most awful manner. The winds seemed to meet from every point of the compass, and the falling drifts flew backward and forward in every direction; the cold became intense, and Owen's efforts to advance homewards were beginning to fail. He was driven about like an autumn leaf; and his dog, which kept close to him, had nearly equal difficulty in proceeding. No sound but that of the tempest could now be heard, except the screaming of the birds as they were tossed on side-wing through the commotion which prevailed.

In this manner was Owen whirled about, till he lost all knowledge of his local situation, being ignorant whether he advanced towards home or otherwise. His mouth and eyes were almost filled with driving sleet; sometimes a cloud of light sand-like drift would almost bury him, as it crossed, or followed, or opposed his path; sometimes he would sink to the middle in a snow-wreath, from which he extricated himself with great difficulty; and among the many terrors by which he was beset, that of walking into a lake or over a precipice was not the least paralysing. Owen was a young man of great personal strength and activity, for the possession of which, next to his brother, he had been distinguished among his companions; but he now became totally exhausted: the chase after M'Kenna, his former exertion, his struggles, his repeated falls, his powerful attempts to get into the vicinity of life, the desperate strength he put forth in breaking through

the vortex of the whirlwind, all had left him faint and completely at the mercy of the elements.

The cold sleet scales were now frozen to ice on his cheeks; his clothes were completely encrusted with the hard snow which had been beaten into them by the strength of the blast, and his joints were getting stiff and benumbed. The tumult of the tempest, the whirling of the snow-clouds. and the thick snow, now falling, and again tossed upwards by sudden gusts to the sky, deprived him of all power of reflection, and rendered him, though not altogether blind or deaf, yet incapable of forming any distinct opinion upon what he saw or heard. Still, actuated by the unconscious principle of self-preservation, he tottered on, cold, feeble, and breathless, now driven back like a reed by the strong rush of the storm, or prostrated almost to suffocation under the whirlwinds that started up like savage creatures of life about him.

During all this time his faithful dog never abandoned him; but his wild howlings only heightened the horrors of his situation. When he fell, the affectionate creature would catch the flap of his coat, or his arm, in his teeth, and attempt to raise him; and as long as his master had presence of mind, with the unerring certainty of instinct he would turn him, when taking a wrong direction, into that which led homewards.

Owen was not, however, reduced to this state without experiencing sensations of which no language could convey adequate notions. At first he struggled heroically with the storm; but when utter darkness threw its impervious shades over the desolation around him, and the fury of the elements grew so tremendous, all the strong propensities to life became roused, the convulsive throes of a young heart on the steep of death threw a wild and corresponding energy into his vigorous frame, and occasioned him to cling to existence with a tenacity rendered still stronger by the terrible consciousness of his unprepared state, and the horror of being plunged into eternity unsupported by the rites of his Church whilst the crime of attempting to take away human life lay on his soul. Those domestic affections, too, which in Irishmen are so strong, became excited: his home, his fire-

side, the faces of his kindred, already impressed with affliction for the death of one brother, and the mild countenance of the fair girl to whom he was about to be united, were conjured up in the powerful imagery of natural feeling, the fountains of which were opened in his heart, and his agonising cry for life rose wildly from the mountain desert upon the voice of the tempest. Then, indeed, when the gulf of a twofold death yawned before him, did the struggling spirit send up its shrieking prayer to Heaven with desperate impulse. These struggles, however, as well as those of the body, became gradually weaker as the storm tossed him about, and with the chill of its breath withered him into total helplessness. He reeled on, stiff and insensible, without knowing whither he went, falling with every blast, and possessing scarcely any faculty of life except mere animation.

After about an hour, however, the storm subsided, and the clouds broke away into light fleecy columns before the wind; the air, too, became less cold, and the face of nature more visible. The driving sleet and hard granular snow now ceased to fall, but were succeeded by large feathery flakes that descended slowly upon the still air.

Had this trying scene lasted much longer, Owen must soon have been a stiffened corpse. The child-like strength, however, which just enabled him to bear up without sinking in despair to die, now supported him when there was less demand for energy. The dog, too, by rubbing itself against him and licking his face, enabled him, by a last effort, to recollect himself, so as to have a glimmering perception of his situation. His confidence returned, and with it a greater degree of strength. He shook, as well as he could, the snow from his clothes, where it had accumulated heavily, and felt himself able to proceed, slowly, it is true, towards his father's house, which he had nearly reached when he met his friends, who were once more hurrying out to the mountains in quest of him, having been compelled to return, in consequence of the storm, when they had first set out. The whisky, their companionship, and their assistance soon revived him. One or two were despatched home before them, to apprise the afflicted family of his safety; and the intelligence was hailed with melancholy joy by the Reillaghans. A faint light played

for a moment over the gloom which had settled among them, but it was brief; for on ascertaining the safety of their second son, their grief rushed back with renewed violence, and nothing could be heard but the voice of sorrow and affliction.

Darby More, who had assumed the control of the family, did everything in his power to console them; his efforts, however, were viewed with a feeling little short of indignation.

"Darby," said the afflicted mother, "you have, undher God, in some sinse, my fair son's death to account for. You had a dhrame, but you wouldn't tell it to us. If you had, my boy might be livin' this day, for it would be asy for him to be an his guard."

"*Musha*, poor woman!" replied Darby, "sure, you don't know, you afflicted crathur, what you're speakin' about. Tell my dhrame!—why, thin, it's myself tould it to him from beginnin' to ind, and that whin we wor goin' to mass this day itself. I desired him, on the peril of his life, not to go out a-tracin' or toards the mountains, good or bad."

"You said you had a prayer that ud keep it back," observed the mother, "an' why didn't you say it?"

"I did say it," replied Darby, "an' that afore a bit crossed my throath this mornin'; but, you see, he broke his promise of not goin' to the mountains, an' that was what made the dhrame come thrue."

"Well, well, Darby, I beg your pardon, an' God's pardon, for judging you in the wrong. Oh, *wurra sthrue!* my brave son, is it there you're lyin' wid us, *avouneen machree!*" and she again renewed her grief.

"Oh, thin, I'm sure I forgive you," said Darby; "but keep your grief in for a start, till I say the *Deprowhinjis* over him, for the pace an' repose of his sowl. Kneel down, all of yees."

He repeated this prayer in language which it would require one of Edward Irving's adepts in the unknown tongues to interpret. When he had recited about the half of it, Owen and those who had gone to seek him entered the house, and, after the example of the others, reverently knelt down until he finished it.

Owen's appearance once more renewed their grief. The

body of his brother had been removed to a bed beyond the fire in the kitchen; and when Owen looked upon the features of his beloved companion, he approached, and stooped down to kiss his lips. He was still too feeble, however, to bend by his own strength; and it is also probable that the warm air of the house relaxed him. Be this, however, as it may, he fell forward, but supported himself by his hands, which were placed upon the body; a deep groan was heard, and the apparently dead man opened his eyes, and feebly exclaimed, "A dhrink! a dhrink!"

Darby More had, on concluding the *De profundis*, seated himself beside the bed on which Mike lay; but on hearing the groan, and the call for drink, he leaped rapidly to his legs, and exclaimed, "My sowl to hell an' the divil, Owen Reillaghan, but your son's alive! Off wid two or three of yees, as hard as the divil can dhrive yees, for the priest an' docthor!! Off wid yees! Ye damned lazy *spalpeens*, aren't ye near there by this? Give us my cant! Are yees gone? Oh, by this an' by that—hell—eh—aren't yees gone?" but ere he could finish the sentence they had set out.

"Now," he exclaimed, in a voice whose tremendous tones were strongly at variance with his own injunctions—"now, neighbours, d——n yees, keep silence! Mrs. Reillaghan, get a bottle of whisky an' a mug o' wather. Make haste! *Hanim an diouol!* don't be all night!"

The poor mother, however, could not stir; the unexpected revulsion of feeling which she had so suddenly experienced was more than she could sustain. A long fainting fit was the consequence, and Darby's commands were obeyed by the wife of a friendly neighbour.

The mendicant immediately wetted Mike's lips, and poured some spirits, copiously diluted with water, down his throat; after which he held the whisky bottle, like a connoisseur, between himself and the light. "I hope," said he, "this whisky is the ra-al crathur." He put the bottle to his mouth as he spoke, and on holding it a second time before his eye he shook his head complacently. "Ay," said he, "if anything could bring the dead back to this world, my sowl to glory, but that would. Oh, thin, it would give the dead life, sure enough!" He put it once more to his lips, from which

it was not separated without relinquishing a considerable portion of its contents.

"*Dhea grasthias!*" he exclaimed; "throth, I find myself the betther o' that sup, in regard that it's good for this touch of configuration that I'm throubled wid inwardly. Oxis Doxis Glorioxis, Amin!" These words he spoke in a low, placid voice, lest the wounded man might be discomposed by his observations.

The rapidity with which the account of Mike's restoration to life spread among the neighbours was surprising. Those who had gone for the priest and doctor communicated it to all they met, and these again to others; so that in a short time the house was surrounded by great numbers of their acquaintances, all anxious to hear the particulars more minutely. Darby, who never omitted an opportunity of impressing the people with a belief in his own sanctity and in that of his crucifix, came out among them and answered their inquiries by a solemn shake of his head and a mysterious indication of his finger to the crucifix, but said nothing more. This was enough. The murmur of reverence and wonder spread among them, and ere long there were few present who did not believe that Reillaghan had been restored to life by a touch of Darby's crucifix; an opinion which is not wholly exploded to this day.

Peggy Gartland, who fortunately had not heard the report of her lover's death until it was contradicted by the account of his revival, now entered, and by her pale countenance betrayed strong symptoms of affection and sympathy. She sat by his side, gazing mournfully on his features, and with difficulty suppressed her tears.

For some time before her arrival the mother and sisters of Mike had been removed to another room, lest the tumultuous expression of their mingled joy and sorrow might disturb him. The fair, artless girl, although satisfied that he still lived, entertained no hopes of his recovery; but she ventured, in a low, trembling voice, to inquire from Darby some particulars of the melancholy transaction which was likely to deprive her of her betrothed husband.

"Where did the shot sthrike him, Darby?"

"Clane through the body, *a villish!* jist where Captain

Cramer was shot at the battle o' Bunker's Hill, where he lay as good as dead for twelve hours, an' was near bein' berrid a corp, an' him alive all the time, only that as they were pullin' him off o' the cart he gev a shout, an' thin, *a colleen dhas*, they began to think he might be livin' still. Sure enough, he was too, an' lived successfully, till he died wid dhrinkin' brandy as a cure for the gout—the Lord be praised!"

"Where's the villain, Darby?"

"He's in the mountains, no doubt, where he had thim to fight wid that's a match for him—God, an' the dark storm that fell a while agone. They'll pay him, never fear, for his thrachery to the noble boy that chastised him for your sake, *acushla oge!* Sthrong was your hand, *a veehal*, an' ginerous was your affectionate heart; an' well you loved the fair girl that's sittin' beside you! Throth, Peggy, my heart's black wid sorrow about the darlin' young man. Still, life's in him; an' while there's life there's hope—glory be to God!"

The eulogium of the pilgrim, who was, in truth, much attached to Mike, moved the heart of the affectionate girl, whose love and sympathy were pure as the dew on the grass-blade, and now as easily affected by the slightest touch. She remained silent for a time, but secretly glided her hand towards that of her lover, which she clasped in hers, and by a gentle and timid pressure strove to intimate to him that she was beside him. Long, but unavailing, was the struggle to repress her sorrow: her bosom heaved; she gave two or three loud sobs and burst into tears and lamentations.

"Don't cry, *avourneen*," whispered Darby—"don't cry; I'll warrant you that Darby More will ate share of your weddin' dinner an' his yit. There's a small taste of colour comin' to his face, which, I think, undher God, is owin' to my touchin' him wid the cruciwhix. Don't cry, *a colleen;* he'll get over it, an' more than it, yit, *colleen bawn*."

Darby then hurried her into the room where Mike's mother and sisters were. On entering she threw herself into the arms of the former, laid her face on her bosom, and wept bitterly. This renewed the mother's grief; she clasped the interesting girl in a sorrowful embrace; so did his sisters. They threw themselves into each other's arms, and poured

forth those touching but wild bursts of pathetic language which are never heard but when the heart is struck by some desolating calamity.

"Husht!" said a neighbouring man who was present; "husht! it's a shame for yees, an' the boy not dead yit."

"I'm not ashamed," said Peggy; "why should I be ashamed of bein' sarry for the likes of Mike Reillaghan? Where was his aquil? Wasn't all hearts upon him? Didn't the very poor on the road bless him whin he passed? Who ever had a bad word agin him but the villain that murdhered him? Murdhered him! Heaven above me! an' why? For my sake! For my sake the pride o' the parish is laid low! Ashamed! Is it for cryin' for my bethrothed husband, that was sworn to me, an' I to him, before the eye of God above us? This day week I was to be his bride; an' now—now ——Oh, Vread [1] Reillaghan, take me to you! Let me go to his mother! My heart's broke, Vread Reillaghan! Let me go to her: nobody's grief for him is like ours. You're his mother, an' I'm his wife in the sight o' God. Proud was I out of him: my eyes brightened when they seen him, an' my heart got light when I heard his voice; an' now what's afore me?—what's afore me but sorrowful days an' a broken heart!"

Mrs. Reillaghan placed her tenderly and affectionately beside her on the bed whereon she herself sat. With the corner of her handkerchief she wiped the tears from the weeping girl, although her own flowed fast. Her daughters also gathered about her, and, in language of the most endearing kind, endeavoured to soothe and console her.

"He may live yet, Peggy, *avourneen*," said his mother—"my brave an' noble son may live yet, an' you may be both happy. Don't be cryin' so much, *asthore galh machree;* sure, he's in the hands o' God, *avourneen*, an' your young heart won't be broke, I hope. Och, the Lord pity her young feelins!" exclaimed the mother, affected even by the consolation she offered to the betrothed bride of her son. "Is it any wondher she'd sink undher sich a blow! for, sure enough, where was the likes of him? No, *asthore!* it's no

[1] Vread is anglicised as Bridget.—Ed.

wondher—it's no wondher! Lonesome will your heart be widout him; for I know what he'd feel if a hair of your head was injured."

"Oh, I know it—I know it! There was music in his voice, an' *grah* an' kindness to every crathur an God's earth; but to me—to me—oh, no one knew his love to me but myself an' God. Oh, if I was dead, that I couldn't feel this, or if my life could save his! Why didn't the villain—the black villain, wid God's curse upon him—why didn't he shoot me, thin I could never be Mike's wife, an' his hand o' murdher might be satisfied? If he had, I wouldn't feel as I do. Ay, the warmest, an' the best, an' the dearest blood of my heart I could shed for him. That heart was his, an' he had a right to it. Our love wasn't of yisterday: afore the links of my hair came to my showlders I loved him an' thought of him; an' many a time he tould me that I was his first! God knows he was my first, an' he will be my last, let him live or die."

"Well, but Peggy, *achora*," said his sister, "maybe it's sinful to be cryin' this a-way an' he not dead."

"God forgive me, if it's a sin," replied Peggy; "I'd not wish to do anything sinful or displasin' to God; an' I'll sthrive to keep down my grief—I will, as well as I can."

She put her hands on her face, and by an effort of firmness subdued the tone of her grief to a low continuous murmur of sorrow.

"An' along wid that," said the sister, "maybe the noise is disturbin' him. Darby put us all out o' the kitchen, to have pace an' quietness about him."

"An' 'twas well thought o' Darby," she replied, "an' may the blessin' o' God rest upon him for it! A male's mate or a night's lodgin' he'll never want undher my father's roof for that goodness to him. I'll be quiet, thin."

There was now a short pause, during which those in the room heard a smack, accompanied by the words, "*Dhea grasthias!* Throth, I'm the betther o' that sup, so I am. Nothin' keeps this thief of a configuration down but it. *Dhea grasthias* for that! Oh, thin, this *is* the stuff! It warms a body to the tops o' the nails!"

"Don't spare it, Darby," said old Reillaghan, "if it does you good."

"*Avourneen*," said Darby, "it's only what gives me a little relief I ever take, jist by way of cure, for it's the only thing does me good when I'm this a-way."

Several persons in the neighbourhood were, in the meantime, flocking to Reillaghan's house. A worthy man, accompanied by his wife, entered as the pilgrim had concluded. The woman, in accordance with the custom of the country, raised the Irish cry, in a loud, melancholy wail, that might be heard at a great distance.

Darby, who prided himself on maintaining silence, could not preserve the consistency of his character upon this occasion, any more than on that of Mike's recent symptoms of life.

"Your sowl to the divil, you faggot!" he exclaimed; "what do you mane? The divil whip the tongue out o' you, are you goin' to come here only to disturb the boy that's not dead yet? Get out o' this, or be asy wid your skhreechin,' or, by the crass that died for us, only you're a woman, I'd tumble you wid a lick o' my cant. Keep asy, you vagrant, an' the dacent boy not dead yet. Hell bellows you, what do you mane?"

"Not dead!" exclaimed the woman, with her body bent in the proper attitude, her hands extended, and the crying face turned with amazement to Darby—"not dead! *Wurrah*, man alive, isn't he murdhered?"

"Hell resave the matther for that!" replied Darby. "I tell you, he's livin', an' will live, I hope, barrin' your skirlin' dhrives the life that's in him out of him. Go into the room there to the women, an' make yourself scarce out o' this, or, by the *padareens* about me, I'll *malivogue* you."

"We can't be angry wid the dacent woman," observed old Reillaghan, "in regard that she came to show her friendship and respect."

"I'd be angry wid St. Pether," said Darby, "an' ud not scruple to give him a lick o' my c—— Lord presarve us! what was I goin' to say! Why, throth, I believe the little wits I had are all gone *a shaughran!* I must fast a Friday or two for the same words agin St. Pether. Oxis Doxis Glorioxis, Amin!"

Hope is strong in love and in life. Peggy, now that grief had eased her heart of its load of accumulated sorrow, began

to reflect upon Darby's anecdote of Captain Cramer, which she related to those about her. They all rejoiced to hear that it was possible to be wounded so severely and live. They also consoled and supported each other, and expressed their trust that Mike might also recover. The opinion of the doctor was waited for with such anxiety as a felon feels when the foreman of the jury hands down the verdict which consigns him to life or death.

Whether Darby's prescription was the result of chance or sagacity we know not. We are bound, however, to declare that Reillaghan's strength was in some degree restored, although the pain he suffered amounted to torture. The surgeon (who was also a physician, and, moreover, supplied his own medicines) and the priest, as they lived in the same town, both arrived together. The latter administered the rites of his Church to him; and the former, who was a skilful man, left nothing undone to accomplish his restoration to health. He had been shot through the body with a bullet—a circumstance which was not known until the arrival of the surgeon. This gentleman expressed much astonishment at his surviving the wound, but said that circumstances of a similar nature had occurred, particularly on the field of battle, although he admitted that they were few.

Darby, however, who resolved to have something like a decided opinion from him, without at all considering whether such a thing was possible, pressed him strongly upon the point.

"*Arrah,* blur-an-ager, Docthor Swither, say one thing or other—is he to live or die? Plain talk, docthor, is all we want, an' no *feasthalagh.*"

"The bullet, I am inclined to think," replied the doctor, "must either not have touched a vital part, or touched it only slightly. I have known cases similar, it is true; but it is impossible for me to pronounce a decisive opinion upon him just now."

"The divil resave the yarrib[1] ever I'll gather for you agin, so long as my name's Darby More, except you say either 'life' or 'death,'" said Darby, who forgot his character of sanctity altogether.

[1] Herb.

"Darby, *achora*," said Mrs. Reillaghan, "don't crass the gintleman, an' him sthrivin' to do his best. Here, Paddhy Gormly, bring some wather till the docthor washes his hands."

"Darby," replied the doctor, to whom he was well known, "you are a good herbalist, but even although you should not serve me as usual in that capacity, yet I cannot say exactly either life or death; the case is too critical a one; but I do not despair, Darby, if that will satisfy you."

"More power to you, docthor, *achora*. Hell-an-age, where's that bottle?—bring it here. Thank you, Vread. Docthor, here's wishin' you all happiness, an' may you set Mike on his legs wanst more! See, docthor—see, man alive—look at this purty girl here, wid her wet cheeks; give her some hope, *thagur*, if you can; keep the crathur's spirits up, an' I'll furnish you wid every yarrib in Europe, from the nettle to the rose."

"Don't despair, my good girl," said the doctor, addressing Peggy; "I hope—I trust that he may recover, but he must be kept easy and quiet."

"May the blessin' of God, sir, light down on you for the same words," replied Peggy, in a voice tremulous with gratitude and joy.

"Are you done wid him, docthor?" said old Reillaghan.

"At present," replied the doctor, "I can do nothing more for him; but I shall see him early to-morrow morning."

"Bekase, sir," continued the worthy man, "here's Darby More, who's afflicted wid a conflamboration, or some sich thing, inwardly, an' if you could ase him, sir, I'd pay the damages, whatever they might be."

The doctor smiled slightly. "Darby's complaint," said he, "is beyond my practice; there is but one cure for it, and that is, if I have any skill, a little of what's in the bottle here, taken, as our prescriptions sometimes say, 'when the patient is inclined for it.'"

"By my sou—sanctity, docthor," said Darby, "you're a man o' skill, anyhow, an' that's well known, sir. Nothin', as Father Hoolaghan says, but the sup o' whisky does this sarra of a configuration good. It rises the wind off o' my stomach, docthor."

"It does, Darby, it does. Now let all be peace and quietness," continued the doctor. "Take away a great part of this fire, and don't attempt to remove him to any other bed until I desire you. I shall call again to-morrow morning, early."

The doctor's attention to his patient was unremitting; everything that human skill, joined to long experience and natural talent, could do to restore the young man to his family was done; and in the course of a few weeks the friends of Reillaghan had the satisfaction of seeing him completely out of danger.

Mike declared, after his recovery, that, though incapable of motion on the mountains, he was not altogether insensible to what passed around him. The loud tones of their conversation he could hear. The oath which young M'Kenna uttered in a voice so wild and exalted, fell clearly on his ear, and he endeavoured to contradict it, in order that he might be secured and punished in the event of his death. He also said that the pain he suffered in the act of being conveyed home occasioned him to groan feebly, but that the sobs, and cries, and loud conversation of those who surrounded him prevented his moans from being heard. It is probable, after all, that were it not for the accidental fall of Owen upon his body he might not have survived the wound, inasmuch as the medical skill which contributed to restore him would not have been called in.

Though old Frank M'Kenna and his family felt an oppressive load of misery taken off their hearts by the prospect of Reillaghan's recovery, yet it was impossible for them to be insensible to the fate of their son, knowing, as they did, that he must have been out among the mountains during the storm. His unhappy mother and Rody sat up the whole night, expecting his return, but morning arrived without bringing him home. For six days afterwards the search for him was general and strict: his friends and neighbours traversed the mountain wastes until they left scarcely an acre of them unexplored. On the sixth day there came a thaw, and towards the close of the seventh he was found a "stiffened corpse," UPON THE VERY SPOT WHERE HE HAD SHOT HIS RIVAL, and on which he had challenged the Almighty to stretch him in death, without priest or prayer, if he were guilty

of the crime with which he had been charged. He was found lying with a circle drawn round him, his head pillowed upon the innocent blood which he had shed with the intention of murder, and a bloody cross marked upon his breast and forehead. It was thought that in the dread of approaching death he had formed it with his hand, which came accidentally in contact with the blood that lay in clots about him.

The manner of his death excited a profound and wholesome feeling among the people with respect to the crime which he attempted to commit. The circumstances attending it, and his oath upon the spot where he shot Reillaghan, are still spoken of by the fathers of the neighbouring villages, and even by some who were present at the search for his body. It was also doubly remarkable on account of a case of spectral illusion which it produced, and which was ascribed to the effect of M'Kenna's supernatural appearance at the time. The daughter of a herdsman in the mountains was strongly affected by the spectacle of his dead body borne past her father's door. In about a fortnight afterwards she assured her family that he appeared to her. She saw the apparition, in the beginning, only at night; but ere long it ventured, as she imagined, to appear in daylight. Many imaginary conversations took place between them; and the fact of the peasantry flocking to the herd's house, to satisfy themselves as to the truth of the rumour, is yet well remembered in the parish. It was also affirmed that as the funeral of M'Kenna passed to the churchyard a hare crossed it, which some one present struck on the side with a stone. The hare, says the tradition, was not injured, but the sound of the stroke resembled that produced on striking an empty barrel.

We have nearly wound up our story, in which we have feebly endeavoured to illustrate scenes that were, some time ago, not unusual in Irish life. There is little more to be added, except that Mike Reillaghan almost miraculously recovered, that he and Peggy Gartland were happily married, and that Darby More lost his character as a dreamer in that part of the parish. Mike, with whom, however, he still continued a favourite, used frequently to allude to the speaking crucifix, the dream aforesaid, and his bit of fiction in assuring

his mother that he had dissuaded him against "tracing" on that eventful day.

"Well, *avourneen*," Darby would exclaim, "the holiest of us has our failins; but, in throth, the truth of it is that myself didn't know what I was sayin', I was so through other,[1] for I remimber that I was badly afflicted wid this thief of a configuration inwardly at the time. That, you see, an' your own throubles, put my mind *a shaughran* for a start. But, upon my sanctity—an', sure, that's a great oath wid me—only for the holy carol you bought from me the night before, an', above all, touchin' you wid the blessed crucifix, you'd never ha' got over the same accident. Oh, you may smile an' shake your head, but it's thruth whether or not! Glory be to God!"

The priest of the parish, on ascertaining correctly the incidents mentioned in this sketch, determined to deprive the people of at least one pretext for their licentiousness. He represented the abuses connected with such a ceremony to the bishop; and from that night to the present time the inhabitants of Kilnaheery never had, in their own parish, an opportunity of hearing a Midnight Mass.

[1] Agitated.

THE PARTY FIGHT AND FUNERAL[1]

IT has long been laid down as a universal principle that self-preservation is the first law of nature. An Irishman, however, has nothing to do with this; he disposes of it as he does of the other laws, and washes his hands out of it altogether. But commend him to a fair, dance, funeral, or wedding, or to any other sport where there is a likelihood of getting his head or his bones broken, and if he survive he will remember you, with a kindness peculiar to himself, to the last day of his life; will drub you from head to heel if he finds that any misfortune has kept you out of a row beyond the usual period of three months; will render the same service to any of your friends that stand in need of it; or, in short, will go to the world's end, or fifty miles farther, as he himself would say, to serve you, provided you can procure him a bit of decent fighting. Now, in truth and soberness, it is difficult to account for this propensity, especially when the task of ascertaining it is assigned to those of another country, or even to those Irishmen whose rank in life places them too far from the customs, prejudices, and domestic opinions of their native peasantry—none of which can be properly known without mingling with them. To my own knowledge, however, it proceeds from education. And here I would beg leave to point out an omission of which the several boards of education have been guilty, and which, I believe, no one but myself has yet been sufficiently acute and philosophical to ascertain, as forming a *sine quâ non* in the national instruction of the lower orders of Irishmen.

[1] We ought, perhaps, to inform our readers that the connection between a party fight and funeral is sufficiently strong to justify the author in classing them under the title which is prefixed to this story. The one, being usually the natural result of the other, is made to proceed from it, as is the custom in real life among the Irish.

The cream of the matter is this. A species of ambition prevails in the Green Isle not known in any other country. It is an ambition of about three miles by four in extent—or, in other words, is bounded by the limits of the parish in which the subject of it may reside. It puts itself forth early in the character, and a hardy perennial it is. In my own case its first development was noticed in the hedge-school which I attended. I had not been long there till I was forced to declare myself either for the Caseys or the Murphys, two tiny factions that had split the school between them. The day on which the ceremony of my declaration took place was a solemn one. After school, we all went to the bottom of a deep valley, a short distance from the schoolhouse. Up to the moment of our assembling there, I had not taken my stand under either banner—that of the Caseys was a sod of turf stuck on the end of a broken fishing-rod; the eagle of the Murphys was a cork-red potato hoisted in the same manner. The turf was borne by an urchin who afterwards distinguished himself at fairs and markets as a *builla battha* of the first grade, and from this circumstance he was nicknamed *Parrah Rackhan*.[1] The potato was borne by little Mickle M'Phaudeen Murphy, who afterwards took away Katty Bane Sheridan without asking her own consent or her father's. They were all then boys, it is true, but they gave a tolerable promise of that eminence which they subsequently attained.

When we arrived at the bottom of the glen, the Murphys and the Caseys, including their respective followers, ranged themselves on either side of a long line which was drawn between the belligerent powers with the butt-end of one of the standards. Exactly on this line was I placed. The word was then put to me in full form—"Whether will you side with the dacent Caseys or the blackguard Murphys?" "Whether will you side with the dacent Murphys or the blackguard Caseys?" "The potato for ever!" said I, throwing up my *caubeen*, and running over to the Murphy standard. In the twinkling of an eye we were at it; and in a short time the deuce an eye some of us had to twinkle.

[1] Paddy Riot (or the Rioter).

A battle-royal succeeded that lasted near half an hour, and it would probably have lasted about double the time were it not for the appearance of the "master," who was seen by a little shrivelled *vidette*, who wanted an arm, and could take no part in the engagement. This was enough; we instantly radiated in all possible directions, so that by the time he had descended through the intricacies of the glen to the field of battle neither victor nor vanquished was visible, except, perhaps, a straggler or two as they topped the brow of the declivity, looking back over their shoulders to put themselves out of doubt as to their visibility by the master. They seldom looked in vain, however; for there he usually stood, shaking up his rod, silently prophetic of its application on the following day. This threat, for the most part, ended in smoke; for, except he horsed about forty or fifty of us, the infliction of impartial justice was utterly out of his power.

But, besides this, there never was a realm in which the evils of a divided cabinet were more visible: the truth is, the monarch himself was under the influence of female government—an influence which he felt it either contrary to his inclination or beyond his power to throw off. "Poor Norah, long may you reign," we often used to exclaim, to the visible mortification of the "master," who felt the benevolence of the wish bottomed upon an indirect want of allegiance to himself. Well, it was a touching scene—how we used to stand with the waistbands of our small-clothes cautiously grasped in our hands, with a timid show of resistance, our brave red faces slobbered over with tears, as we stood naked for execution! Never was there a finer specimen of deprecation in eloquence than we then exhibited—the supplicating look right up into the master's face; the touching modulation of the whine; the additional tightness and caution with which we grasped the waistbands with one hand, when it was necessary to use the other in wiping our eyes and noses with the polished sleeve-cuff; the sincerity and vehemence with which we promised never to be guilty again, still shrewdly including the condition of present impunity for our offence: "this—one—time—master, if ye plaise, sir;" and the utter hopelessness and despair which

were legible in the last groan, as we grasped the "master's" leg in utter recklessness of judgment, were all perfect in their way. Reader, have you ever got a reprieve from the gallows? I beg pardon, my dear sir; I only meant to ask, are you capable of entering into what a personage of that description might be supposed to feel, on being informed, after the knot had been neatly tied under the left ear, and the cap drawn over his eyes, that his Majesty had granted him a full pardon? But you remember your own schoolboy days, and that's enough.

The nice discrimination with which Norah used to time her interference was indeed surprising. God help us! limited was our experience, and shallow our little judgments, or we might, with less trouble than Sir Humphry Davy deciphered the Herculaneum MSS., have known what the master meant when, with the upraised arm hung over us, his eye was fixed upon the door of the kitchen, waiting for Norah's appearance.

Long, my fair and virtuous countrywomen—I repeat it to you all, as I did to Norah—may you reign in the hearts and affections of your husbands (but nowhere else), the grace, ornaments, and happiness of their hearths and lives, you jewels, you! You are paragons of all that's good, and your feelings are highly creditable to yourselves and to humanity.

When Norah advanced, with her brawny uplifted arm (for she was a powerful woman) and forbidding aspect, to interpose between us and the avenging terrors of the birch, do you think that she did not reflect honour on her sex and the national character? I sink the base allusion to the *miscaun* of fresh butter which we had placed in her hands that morning, or the dish of eggs or of meal which we had either begged or stolen at home, as a present for her; disclaiming, at the same time, the rascally idea of giving it from any motive beneath the most lofty-minded and disinterested generosity on our part.

Then, again, never did a forbidding face shine with so winning and amicable an expression as did hers on that merciful occasion. The sun dancing a hornpipe on Easter Sunday morning, or the full moon sailing as proud as a peacock in a new halo head-dress, was a very disrespectable

sight compared to Norah's red, beaming face, shrouded in her dowd cap with long ears that descended to her masculine and substantial neck. Owing to her influence, the whole economy of the school was good; for we were permitted to cuff one another, and do whatever we please, with impunity, if we brought the meal, eggs, or butter; except some scapegoat who was not able to accomplish this, and he generally received on his own miserable carcase what was due to us all.

Poor Jack Murray! his last words on the scaffold, for being concerned in the murder of Pierce the gauger, were, that he got the first of his bad habits under Pat Mulligan and Norah—that he learned to steal by secreting at home butter and meal to paste up the master's eyes to his bad conduct—and that his fondness for quarrelling arose from being permitted to head a faction at school; a most ungrateful return for the many acts of grace which the indulgence of Norah caused to be issued in his favour.

I was but a short time under Pat, when, after the general example, I had my cudgel, which I used to carry regularly to a certain furze bush within fifty perches of the "seminary," where I hid it till after "dismiss." I grant it does not look well in me to become my own panegyrist; but I can at least declare that there were few among the Caseys able to resist the prowess of this right arm, puny as it was at the period in question. Our battles were obstinate and frequent; but as the quarrels of the two families and their relations on each side were as bitter and pugnacious in fairs and markets as ours were in school, we hit upon the plan of holding our Lilliputian engagements upon the same days on which our fathers and brothers contested. According to this plan, it very often happened that the corresponding parties were successful, and as frequently that whilst the Caseys were well drubbed in the fair, their sons were victorious at school, and *vice versâ*.

For my part I was early trained to cudgelling, and before I reached my fourteenth year could pronounce as sage and accurate an opinion upon the merits of a *shillelagh*, as it is called, or cudgel, as a veterinary surgeon of sixty could upon a dead ass at first sight. Our plan of preparing is this. We

sallied out to any place where there was an underwood of blackthorn or oak, and having surveyed the premises with the eye of a connoisseur, we selected the straightest root-growing piece which we could find; for if not root-growing, we did not consider it worth cutting, knowing from experience that a branch, how straight and fair soever it might look, would snap in the twist and tug of war. Having cut it as close to the root as possible, we then lopped off the branches, and put it up in the chimney to season. When seasoned, we took it down, and wrapping it in brown paper, well steeped in hog's lard or oil, we buried it in a horse-dunghill, paying it a daily visit for the purpose of making it straight by doubling back the bends or angles across the knee, in a direction contrary to their natural tendency. Having daily repeated this until we had made it straight, and renewed the oiled wrapping-paper until the staff was perfectly saturated, we then rubbed it well with a woollen cloth containing a little black-lead and grease, to give it a polish. This was the last process; except that if we thought it too light at the top, we used to bore a hole in the lower end with a red-hot iron spindle, into which we poured melted lead, for the purpose of giving it the knock-down weight.

There were very few of Paddy Mulligan's scholars without a choice collection of them, and scarcely one who had not, before his fifteenth year, a just claim to be called the hero of a hundred fights, and the heritor of as many bumps on the cranium as would strike both Gall and Spurzheim speechless.

Now this, be it known, was, and in some districts yet is, an integral part of an Irish peasant's education. In the northern parts of Ireland, where the population of the Catholics on the one side, and of Protestants and Dissenters on the other, is nearly equal, I have known the respective scholars of Catholic and Protestant schools to challenge each other, and meet half-way to do battle, in vindication of their respective creeds; or for the purpose of establishing the character of their respective masters as the more learned man; for if we were to judge by the nature of the education then received, we would be led to conclude that a more commercial nation than Ireland was not on the face of the earth, it being the indispensable part of every scholar's

business to become acquainted with the three sets of book-keeping.

The boy who was the handiest and the most daring with the cudgel at Paddy Mulligan's school was Denis Kelly, the son of a wealthy farmer in the neighbourhood. He was a rash, hot-tempered, good-natured lad, possessing a more than common share of this blackthorn ambition; on which account he was cherished by his relations as a boy that was likely at a future period to be able to walk over the course of the parish in fair, market, or patron. He certainly grew up a stout, able young fellow, and before he reached nineteen years was unrivalled at the popular exercises of the peasantry. Shortly after that time he made his *début* in a party quarrel, which took place in one of the Christmas *maragah-mores*, and fully sustained the anticipations which were formed of him by his relations. For a year or two afterwards no quarrel was fought without him; and his prowess rose until he had gained the very pinnacle of that ambition which he had determined to reach. About this time I was separated from him, having found it necessaay, in order to accomplish my objects in life, to reside with a relation in another part of the country.

The period of my absence, I believe, was about fourteen years, during which space I heard no account of him whatsoever. At length, however, that inextinguishable attachment which turns the affections and memory to the friends of our early days—to those scenes which we traversed when the heart was light and the spirits buoyant—determined me to make a visit to my native place, that I might witness the progress of time and care upon those faces that were once so familiar to me; that I might once more look upon the meadows, and valleys, and groves, and mountains where I had so often played, and to which I still found myself bound by a tie that a more enlightened view of life and nature only made stronger and more enduring. I accordingly set off, and arrived, late in the evening of a December day, at a little town within a few miles of my native home. On alighting from the coach, and dining, I determined to walk home, as it was a fine frosty night. The full moon hung in the blue unclouded firmament in all her lustre, and the stars shone

out with that tremulous twinkling motion so peculiarly remarkable in frost. I had been absent, I said, about fourteen years, and felt that the enjoyment of this night would form an era in the records of my memory and my feelings. I find myself, indeed, utterly incapable of expressing what I experienced; but those who have ever been in similar circumstances will understand what I mean. A strong spirit of practical poetry and romance was upon me, and I thought that a commonplace approach in the open day would have rendered my return to the scenes of my early life a very stale and unedifying matter.

I left the inn at seven o'clock, and as I had only five miles to walk, I would just arrive about nine, allowing myself to saunter on at the rate of two miles and a half per hour. My sensations, indeed, as I went along, were singular; and as I took a solitary road across the mountains, the loneliness of the walk, the deep gloom of the valleys, the towering height of the dark hills, and the pale silvery light of a sleeping lake shining dimly in the distance below, gave me such a distinct notion of the sublime and beautiful as I have seldom since experienced. I recommend every man who has been fourteen years absent from his native fields to return by moonlight.

Well, there is a mystery yet undiscovered in our being, for no man can know his feelings or his capacities. Many a slumbering thought, and sentiment, and association reposes within him of which he is utterly ignorant, and which, except he come in contact with those objects whose influence over his mind can alone call them into being, may never be awakened, or give him one moment of either pleasure or pain. There is, therefore, a great deal in the position which we hold in society, and simply in situation. I felt this on that night; for the tenor of my reflections was new and original, and my feelings had a warmth and freshness in them which nothing but the situation in which I then found myself could give them. The force of association, too, was powerful; for, as I advanced nearer home, the names of hills, and lakes, and mountains that I had utterly forgotten, as I thought, were distinctly revived in my memory, and a crowd of youthful thoughts and feelings that I imagined my intercourse with the world and the finger of time had blotted out of my being

began to crowd afresh on my fancy. The name of a townland would instantly return with its appearance; and I could now remember the history of families and individuals that had long been effaced from my recollection.

But what is even more singular is that the superstitious terrors of my boyhood began to come over me, as formerly, whenever a spot noted for supernatural appearances met my eye. It was in vain that I exerted myself to expel them, by throwing the barrier of philosophic reasoning in their way; they still clung to me, in spite of every effort to the contrary. But the fact is that I was for the moment the slave of a morbid and feverish sentiment, that left me completely at the mercy of the dark and fleeting images that passed over my fancy. I now came to a turn where the road began to slope down into the depths of a valley that ran across it. When I looked forward into the bottom, all was darkness impenetrable, for the moonbeams were thrown off by the height of the mountains that rose on each side of it. I felt an indefinite sensation of fear, because at that moment I recollected that it had been, in my younger days, notorious as the scene of an apparition, where the spirit of a murdered pedlar had never been known to permit a solitary traveller to pass without appearing to him, and walking cheek-by-jowl along with him to the next house on the way, at which spot he usually vanished. The influence of my feelings, or, I should rather say, the physical excitement of my nerves, was by no means slight as these old traditions recurred to me; although, at the same time, my moral courage was perfectly unimpaired, so that, notwithstanding this involuntary apprehension, I felt a degree of novelty and curiosity in descending the valley. "If it appear," said I, "I shall at least satisfy myself as to the truth of apparitions."

My dress consisted of a long dark surtout, the collar of which, as the night was keen, I had turned up about my ears, and the corners of it met round my face. In addition to this I had a black silk handkerchief tied across my mouth to keep out the night air; so that, as my dark fur travelling cap came down over my face, there was very little of my countenance visible. I now had advanced half-way into the valley, and all about me was dark and still: the moonlight

was not nearer than the top of the hill which I was descending; and I often turned round to look upon it, so silvery and beautiful it appeared at a distance. Sometimes I stood for a few moments admiring its effect, and contemplating the dark mountains as they stood out against the firmament, then kindled into magnificent grandeur by the myriads of stars that glowed in its expanse. There was perfect silence and solitude around me; and as I stood alone in the dark chamber of the mountains I felt the impressiveness of the situation gradually supersede my terrors. A sublime sense of religious awe descended on me; my soul kindled into a glow of solemn and elevated devotion, which gave me a more intense perception of the presence of God than I had ever before experienced. "How sacred—how awful," thought I, "is this place!—how impressive is this hour!—surely I feel myself at the footstool of God! The voice of worship is in this deep, soul-thrilling silence; and the tongue of praise speaks, as it were, from the very solitude of the mountains!" I then thought of Him who went up into a mountain-top to pray, and felt the majesty of those admirable descriptions of the Almighty given in the Old Testament blend in delightful harmony with the beauty and fitness of the Christian dispensation, that brought life and immortality to light. "Here," said I, "do I feel that I am indeed immortal, and destined for scenes of a more exalted and comprehensive existence!"

I then proceeded farther into the valley, completely freed from the influence of old and superstitious associations. A few perches below me a small river crossed the road, over which was thrown a little stone bridge of rude workmanship. This bridge was the spot on which the apparition was said to appear; and as I approached it I felt the folly of those terrors which had only a few minutes before beset me so strongly. I found my moral energies recruited, and the dark phantasms of my imagination dispelled by the light of religion, which had refreshed me with a deep sense of the Almighty presence. I accordingly walked forward, scarcely bestowing a thought upon the history of the place, and had got within a few yards of the bridge, when, on resting my eye accidentally upon the little elevation formed by its rude arch, I perceived a black

coffin placed at the edge of the road, exactly upon the bridge!

It may be evident to the reader that, however satisfactory the force of philosophical reasoning might have been upon the subject of the solitude, I was too much the creature of sensation for an hour before to look on such a startling object with firm nerves. For the first two or three minutes, therefore, I exhibited as finished a specimen of the dastardly as could be imagined. My hair absolutely raised my cap some inches off my head; my mouth opened to an extent which I did not conceive it could possibly reach; I thought my eyes shot out from their sockets; and my fingers spread out and became stiff, though powerless. The *obstupui* was perfectly realised in me; for, with the exception of a single groan which I gave on first seeing the object, I found that if one word would save my life or transport me to my own fireside, I could not utter it. I was also rooted to the earth as if by magic; and although instant tergiversation and flight had my most hearty concurrence, I could not move a limb, nor even raise my eye off the sepulchral-looking object which lay before me. I now felt the perspiration fall from my face in torrents, and the strokes of my heart fell audibly on my ear. I even attempted to say, "God preserve me," but my tongue was dumb and powerless, and could not move. My eye was still upon the coffin, when I perceived that, from being motionless, it instantly began to swing, first in a lateral, then in a longitudinal direction, although it was perfectly evident that no human hand was nearer it than my own. At length I raised my eyes off it, for my vision was strained to an aching intensity which I thought must have occasioned my eye-strings to crack. I looked instinctively about me for assistance—but all was dismal, silent, and solitary; even the moon had disappeared among a few clouds that I had not noticed in the sky.

As I stood in this state of indescribable horror I saw the light gradually fade away from the tops of the mountains, giving the scene around me a dim and spectral ghastliness, which to those who were never in such a situation is altogether inconceivable.

At length I thought I heard a noise as it were of a rushing

tempest sweeping from the hills down into the valley; but on looking up I could perceive nothing but the dusky desolation that brooded over the place. Still the noise continued; again I saw the coffin move; I then felt the motion communicated to myself, and found my body borne and swung backwards and forwards, precisely according to the motion of the coffin. I again attempted to utter a cry for assistance, but could not. The motion of my body still continued, as did the approaching noise in the hills. I looked up a second time in the direction in which the valley wound off between them, but judge of what I must have suffered when I beheld one of the mountains moving, as it were, from its base, and tumbling down towards the spot on which I stood. In the twinkling of an eye the whole scene, hills and all, began to tremble, to vibrate and to fly round me with a rapid, delirious motion; the stars shot back into the depths of heaven, and disappeared; the ground on which I stood began to pass from beneath my feet; a noise like the breaking of a thousand gigantic billows again burst from every direction, and I found myself instantly overwhelmed by some deadly weight, which prostrated me on the earth, and deprived me of sense and motion.

I know not how long I continued in this state; but I remember that, on opening my eyes, the first object that presented itself to me was the sky, glowing as before with ten thousand stars, and the moon walking in her unclouded brightness through the heavens. The whole circumstance then rushed back upon my mind, but with a sense of horror very much diminished. I arose, and on looking towards the spot, perceived the coffin in the same place. I then stood, and endeavouring to collect myself, viewed it as calmly as possible; it was, however, as motionless and distinct as when I first saw it. I now began to reason upon the matter, and to consider that it was pusillanimous in me to give way to such boyish terrors. The confidence, also, which my heart, only a short time before this, had experienced in the presence and protection of the Almighty, again returned, and, along with it, a degree of religious fortitude which invigorated my whole system. "Well," thought I, "in the name of God I shall ascertain what you are, let the consequence be what it

may." I then advanced until I stood exactly over it, and raising my foot, gave it a slight kick. "Now," said I, "nothing remains but to ascertain whether it contains a dead body or not," but on raising the end of it I perceived by its lightness that it was empty. To investigate the cause of its being left in this solitary spot was, however, not within the compass of my philosophy, so I gave that up. On looking at it more closely I noticed a plate marked with the name and age of the person for whom it was intended, and on bringing my eye near the letters, I was able, between fingering and reading, to make out the name of my old cudgel-fighting schoolfellow, Denis Kelly.

This discovery threw a partial light upon the business; but I now remembered to have heard of individuals who had seen black, unearthly coffins inscribed with the names of certain living persons, and that these were considered as ominous of the death of those persons. I accordingly determined to be certain that this was a real coffin; and as Denis's house was not more than a mile before me, I decided on carrying it that far. "If he be dead," thought I, "it will be all right; and if not, we will see more about it." My mind, in fact, was diseased with terror. I instantly raised the coffin, and as I found a rope lying on the ground under it, I strapped it about my shoulders and proceeded; nor could I help smiling when I reflected upon the singular transition which the man of sentiment and sensation so strangely underwent—from the sublime contemplation of the silent mountain solitude and the spangled heavens to the task of carrying a coffin. It was an adventure, however, and I was resolved to see how it would terminate.

There was from the bridge an ascent in the road, not so gradual as that by which I descended on the other side; and as the coffin was rather heavy, I began to repent of having anything to do with it, for I was by no means experienced in carrying coffins. The carriage of it was, indeed, altogether an irksome and unpleasant concern; for owing to my ignorance of using the rope that tied it skilfully, it was every moment sliding down my back, dragging along the stones, or bumping against my heels; besides, I saw no sufficient grounds I had for entering upon the ludicrous and odd employment of

carrying another man's coffin, and was several times upon the point of washing my hands out of it altogether. But the novelty of the incident, and the mystery in which it was involved, decided me in bringing it as far as Kelly's house, which was exactly on my way home.

I had yet half a mile to go; but I thought it would be best to strap it more firmly about my body before I could start again. I therefore set it standing on its end, just at the turn of the road, until I should breathe a little, for I was rather exhausted by a trudge under it of half a mile and upwards. Whilst the coffin was in this position, I standing exactly behind it (Kelly had been a tall man, consequently it was somewhat higher than I was), a crowd of people bearing lights advanced round the corner, and the first object which presented itself to their vision was the coffin in that position, whilst I was totally invisible behind it. As soon as they saw it there was an involuntary cry of consternation from the whole crowd. At this time I had the coffin once more strapped firmly by a running knot to my shoulders, so that I could loose it whenever I pleased. On seeing the party, and hearing certain expressions which dropped from them, I knew at once that there had been some unlucky blunder in the business on their part; and I would have given a good deal to be out of the circumstances in which I then stood. I felt that I could not possibly have accounted for my situation without bringing myself in for as respectable a portion of rank cowardice as those who ran away from the coffin; for that it was left behind in a fit of terror I now entertained no doubt whatever, particularly when I remembered the traditions connected with the spot in which I found it.

"*Manim a Yea agus a wurrah!*" exclaimed one of them, "if the black man hasn't brought it up from the bridge—*dher a lorna heena*, he did; for it was above the bridge we first seen him: jist for all the world—the Lord be about us—as Antony and me war coming out on the road at the bridge, there he was standing—a headless man, all black, widout face or eyes upon him—and then we cut acrass the fields home."

"But where is he now, Eman?" said one of them. "Are you sure you seen him?"

"Seen him!" both exclaimed; "do ye think we'd take to our scrapers like two hares, only we did? Arrah, bad manners to you, do you think the coffin could walk up wid itself from the bridge to this, only he brought it?—isn't that enough?"

"Thrue for yees," the rest exclaimed; "but what's to be done?"

"Why, to bring the coffin home, now that we're all together," another observed. "They say he never appears to more than two at wanst, so he won't be apt to show himself now."

"Well, boys, let two of you go down to it," said one of them, "and we'll wait here till yees bring it up."

"Yes," said Eman Dhu, "do you go down, Owen, as you have the scapular [1] on you, and the jug of holy water in your hand, and let Billy M'Shane, here, repate the confeethur [2] along wid you."

"Isn't it the same thing, Eman," replied Owen, "if I shake the holy water on you and whoever goes wid you: sure, you know that if only one dhrop of it touched you, the divil himself couldn't harm you!"

"And what needs yourself be afraid, then," retorted Eman, "and you has the scapular on you to the back of that? Didn't you say, as you war coming out, that if it was the divil you'd disparse him?"

"You had betther not be mintioning his name, you *omadhaun*," replied the other. "If I was your age, and hadn't a wife and childher on my hands, it's myself that would trust in God and go down manfully; but the people are henhearted now besides what they used to be in my time."

During this conversation I had resolved, if possible, to keep up the delusion until I could get myself extricated with due secrecy out of this ridiculous situation; and I was glad to find that, owing to their cowardice, there was some likelihood of effecting my design.

"Ned," said one of them to a little man, "go down and speak to it, as it can't harm *you*."

"Why, sure," said Ned, with a tremor in his voice, "I can

[1] A blessed object worn on the body to keep away evil.
[2] "Confiteor."

speak to it where I am, widout going within rache of it. Boys, stay close to me—hem—In the name of—But don't you think I had betther spake to it in the Latin I sarve mass wid? it can't but answer that, for the sowl of it, seeing it's a blest language."

"Very well," the rest replied; "try that, Ned; give it the best and ginteelest grammar you have, and maybe it may thrate us dacent."

Now it so happened that in my schoolboy days I had joined, from mere frolic, a class of young fellows who were learning what is called the "Sarvin' of Mass," and had impressed it so accurately on a pretty retentive memory that I never forgot it. At length Ned pulled out his beads, and bedewed himself most copiously with the holy water. He then shouted out, with a voice which resembled that of a man in an ague fit—"*Dom-i-n-us vo-bis-cum?*" "*Et cum spiritu tuo,*" I replied, in a husky, sepulchral tone, from behind the coffin. As soon as I uttered these words the whole crowd ran back instinctively with affright; and Ned got so weak that they were obliged to support him.

"Lord have marcy on us!" said Ned. "Boys, isn't it an awful thing to speak to a spirit! My hair is like I dunna what, it's sticking up so stiff upon my head."

"Spake to it in English, Ned," said they, "till we hear what it will say. Ax it does anything trouble it, or whether its sowl's in purgatory."

"Wouldn't it be betther," observed another, "to ax it who murdhered it?—maybe it wants to discover that."

"In the—na-me of go-o-d-ness," said Ned, down to me, "what are you?"

"I'm the soul," I replied in the same voice, "of the pedlar that was murdered on the bridge below."

"And—who—was—it, sur, wid—submission, that—murdhered—you?"

To this I made no reply.

"I say," continued Ned, "in—the—name—of—g-o-o-d-ness—who was it—that took the liberty of murdhering you, dacent man?"

"Ned Corrigan," I answered, giving his own name.

"Hem! God presarve us! Ned Corrigan!" he exclaimed.

"What Ned, for there's two of them? Is it myself, or the other vagabone?"

"Yourself, you murderer!" I replied.

"Ho!" said Ned, getting quite stout—"is that you, neighbour? Come now, walk out wid yourself out of that coffin, you vagabone you, whoever you are."

"What do you mane, Ned, by spaking to it that a-away?" the rest inquired.

"Hut," said Ned, "it's some fellow or other that's playing a thrick upon us. Sure, I never knew neither act nor part of the murdher nor of the murdherers; and you know, if it was anything of that nature, it couldn't tell me a lie, and me a scapularian, along wid axing it in God's name, wid Father Feasthalagh's Latin."

"Big tare-an-ouns!" said the rest, "if we thought it was any man making fun of us, but we'd crop the ears off his head, to tache him to be joking!"

To tell the truth, when I heard this suggestion I began to repent of my frolic; but I was determined to make another effort to finish the adventure creditably.

"Ned," said they, "throw some of the holy water on us all, and in the name of St. Pether and the Blessed Virgin we'll go down and examine it in a body."

This they considered a good thought, and Ned was sprinkling the water about him in all directions, whilst he repeated some jargon which was completely unintelligible. They then began to approach the coffin at dead-march time, and I felt that this was the only moment in which my plan could succeed, for had I waited until they came down, all would have been discovered. As soon, therefore, as they began to move towards me, I also began, with equal solemnity, to retrograde towards them; so that as the coffin was between us, it seemed to move without human means.

"Stop, for God's sake—stop!" shouted Ned; "it's movin'! It has made the coffin alive; don't you see it stepping this way widout hand or foot, barring the boords!"

There was now a halt to ascertain the fact; but I still retrograded. This was sufficient—a cry of terror broke from the whole group, and without waiting for further evidence they set off in the direction they came from, at full speed,

Ned flinging the jug of holy water at the coffin, lest the latter should follow, or the former encumber him in his flight. Never was there so complete a discomfiture; and so eager were they to escape that several of them came down on the stones, and I could hear them shouting with desperation, and imploring the more advanced not to leave them behind. I instantly disentangled myself from the coffin, and left it standing exactly in the middle of the road, for the next passenger to give it a lift as far as Denis Kelly's, if he felt so disposed. I lost no time in making the best of my way home; and on passing poor Denis's house, I perceived, by the bustle and noise within, that he was dead.

I had given my friends no notice of this visit; my reception was consequently the warmer, as I was not expected. That evening was a happy one, which I shall long remember. At supper I alluded to Kelly, and received from my brother a full account, as given in the following narrative, of the circumstances which caused his death.

"I need not remind you, Toby, of our schoolboy days, nor of the principles usually imbibed at such schools as that in which the two tiny factions of the Caseys and the Murphys qualified themselves—among the latter of whom you cut so distinguished a figure. You will not, therefore, be surprised to hear that those two factions are as bitter as ever, and that the boys who at Pat Mulligan's school belaboured each other, in imitation of their brothers and fathers, continue to set the same iniquitous example to their children; so that this groundless and hereditary enmity is likely to descend to future generations—unless, indeed, the influence of a more enlightened system of education may check it. But, unhappily, there is a strong suspicion of the object proposed by such a system; so that the advantages likely to result from it to the lower orders of the people will be slow and distant."

"But, John," said I, "now that we are upon that subject, let me ask what really is the bone of contention between Irish factions?"

"I assure you," he replied, "I am almost as much at a loss, Toby, to give you a satisfactory answer as if you asked me the elevation of the highest mountain on the moon; and

I believe you would find equal difficulty in ascertaining the cause of the feuds from the factions themselves. I really am convinced they know not, nor, if I rightly understand them, do they much care. Their object is to fight, and the turning of a straw will at any time furnish them with sufficient grounds for that. I do not think, after all, that the enmity between them is purely personal: they do not hate each other individually; but having originally had one quarrel upon some trifling occasion, the beaten party could not bear the stigma of defeat without another trial of strength. Then if they succeed, the *onus* of retrieving lost credit is thrown upon the party that was formerly victorious. If they fail a second time, the double triumph of their conquerors excites them to a greater determination to throw off the additional disgrace; and this species of alternation perpetuates the evil.

"These habits, however, familiarise our peasantry to acts of outrage and violence—the bad passions are cultivated and nourished, until crimes, which peaceable men look upon with fear and horror, lose their real magnitude and deformity in the eyes of Irishmen. I believe this kind of undefined hatred between either parties or nations is the most dangerous and fatal spirit which could pervade any portion of society. If you hate a man for an obvious and palpable injury, it is likely that when he cancels that injury by an act of subsequent kindness, accompanied by an exhibition of sincere sorrow, you will cease to look upon him as your enemy; but where the hatred is such that, while feeling it, you cannot, on a sober examination of your heart, account for it, there is little hope that you will ever be able to stifle the enmity which you entertain against him. This, however, in politics and religion is what is frequently designated as principle—a word on which men possessing higher and greater advantages than the poor ignorant peasantry of Ireland pride themselves. In sects and parties we may mark its effects among all ranks and nations. I therefore seldom wish, Toby, to hear a man assert that he is of this party or that from principle; for I am usually inclined to suspect that he is not in this case influenced by conviction.

"Kelly was a man who, but for these scandalous proceedings among us, might have been now alive and happy.

Although his temperament was warm, yet that warmth communicated itself to his good as well as to his evil qualities. In the beginning his family were not attached to any faction —and when I use the word faction it is in contradistinction to the word party,; for faction, you know, is applied to a feud or grudge between Roman Catholics exclusively. But when he was young he ardently attached himself to the Murphys; and having continued among them until manhood, he could not abandon them consistently with that sense of mistaken honour which forms so prominent a feature in the character of Irish peasantry. But although the Kellys were not faction men, they were bitter party men, being the ringleaders of every quarrel which took place between the Catholics and Protestants, or, I should rather say, between the Orangemen and Whiteboys.

"From the moment when Denis attached himself to the Murphys until the day he received the beating which subsequently occasioned his death, he never withdrew from them. He was in all their battles; and in course of time induced his relations to follow his example; so that, by general consent, they were nicknamed 'the Errigle Slashers.' Soon after you left the country, and went to reside with my uncle, Denis married a daughter of little Dick Magrath's, from the Race-road, with whom he got a little money. She proved a kind, affectionate wife; and, to do him justice, I believe he was an excellent husband. Shortly after his marriage his father died, and Denis succeeded him in his farm; for you know that among the peasantry the youngest usually gets the landed property—the elder children being obliged to provide for themselves according to their ability, or otherwise a population would multiply upon a portion of land inadequate to their support.

"It was supposed that Kelly's marriage would have been the means of producing a change in him for the better, but it did not. He was, in fact, the slave of a low, vain ambition which constantly occasioned him to have some quarrel or other on his hands; and as he possessed great physical courage and strength, he became the champion of the parish. It was in vain that his wife used every argument to induce him to relinquish such practices; the only reply he was in

the habit of making was a good-humoured slap on the back and a laugh, saying—

"'That's it, Honor; sure and isn't that the Magraths all over, that would let the manest *spalpeen* that ever chewed cheese thramp upon them widout raising a hand in their own defence; and I don't blame you for being a coward, seeing that you have their blood in your veins—not but that there ought to be something betther in you, afther all; for it's the M'Carrons, by your mother's side, that had the good dhrop of their own in them, anyhow—but you're a Magrath, out and out.'

"'And, Denis,' Honor would reply, 'it would be a blessed day for the parish if all in it were as peaceable as the same Magraths. There would be no sore heads, nor broken bones, nor fighting, nor slashing of one another in fairs and markets, when people ought to be minding their business. You're ever and always at the Magraths, bekase they don't join you agin the Caseys or the Orangemen, and more fools they'd be to make or meddle between you, having no spite agin either of them; and it would be wiser for you to be sed by the Magraths, and red your hands out of sich ways altogether. What did ever the Murphys do to sarve you or any of your family, that you'd go to make a great man of yourself fighting for them? Or what did the poor Caseys do to make you go agin the honest people? Arrah, bad manners to me, if you know what you're about, or if sonse[1] or grace can ever come of it; and mind my words, Denis, if God hasn't sed it, you'll live to rue your folly for the same work.'

"At this Denis would laugh heartily. 'Well said Honor Magrath, but not Kelly. Well, it's one comfort that our childher aren't likely to follow your side of the house, anyway. Come here, Lanty—come over, *acushla*, to your father! Lanty, *ma bouchal*, what 'ill you do when you grow a man?'

"'I'll buy a horse of my own to ride on, daddy.'

"'A horse, Lanty!—and so you will, *ma bouchal;* but that's not it—sure, that's not what I mane, Lanty. What 'ill you do to the Caseys?'

"'Ho, ho! the Caseys!—I'll bate the blackguards wid your blackthorn, daddy!'

[1] Good luck.

"'Ha, ha, ha!—that's my stout man—my brave little sodger! *Wus dha lamh avick!*—give me your hand, my son! Here, Nelly,' he would say to the child's eldest sister, 'give him a brave whang of bread, to make him able to bate the Caseys. Well, Lanty, who more will you leather, *ahagur?*'

"'All the Orangemen—I'll kill all the Orangemen!'

"This would produce another laugh from the father, who would again kiss and shake hands with his son for these early manifestations of his own spirit.

"'Lanty, *ma bouchal,*' he would say, 'thank God you're not a Magrath; 'tis you that's a Kelly, every blessed inch of you!—and if you turn out as good a *builla batthah* as your father afore you, I'll be contint, *avourneen!*'

"'God forgive you, Denis,' the wife would reply—'it's long before you'd think of larning him his prayers, or his catechism, or anything that's good! Lanty, *agra,* come over to myself, and never heed what that man says; for, except you have some poor body's blessing, he'll bring you to no good.'

"Sometimes, however, Kelly's own natural good sense, joined with the remonstrances of his wife, prevailed for a short time, and he would withdraw himself from the connection altogether; but the force of habit and of circumstances was too strong in him to hope that he could ever overcome it by his own firmness, for he was totally destitute of religion. The peaceable intervals of his life were therefore very short.

"One summer evening I was standing in my own garden, when I saw a man galloping up towards me at full speed. When he approached I recognised him as one of the Murphy faction, and perceived that he was cut and bleeding.

"'Murphy,' said I, 'what's the matter?'

"'Hard fighting, sir,' said he, 'is the matter. The Caseys gathered all their faction, bekase they heard that Denis Kelly has given us up, and they're sweeping the street wid us. I'm going hot foot for Kelly, sir, for even the very name of him will turn the tide in our favour. Along wid that, I have sint in a score of the Duggans, and if I get in Denis, plase God, we'll clear the town of them!'

"He then set off, but pulled up abruptly, and said—

"'*Arrah,* Mr. Darcy, maybe you'd be civil enough to lind

me the loan of a sword, or bagnet, or gun, or anything that way, that would be sarviceable to a body on a pinch?'

"'Yes!' said I, 'and enable you to commit murder. No, no, Murphy! I'm sorry it's not in my power to put a final stop to such dangerous quarrels.'

"He then dashed off, and in the course of a short time I saw him and Kelly, both on horseback, hurrying into the town in all possible haste, armed with their cudgels. The following day I got my dog and gun, and sauntered about the hills, making a point to call upon Kelly. I found him with his head tied up, and his arm in a sling.

"'Well, Denis,' said I, 'I find you have kept your promise of giving up quarrels!'

"'And so I did, sir,' said Denis; 'but, sure, you wouldn't have me go for to desart them, when the Caseys war three to one over them. No; God be thanked, I'm not so mane as that, anyhow. Besides, they welted both my brothers within an inch of their lives.'

"I think they didn't miss yourself,' said I.

"'You may well say they did not, sir,' he replied; 'and, to tell God's thruth, they thrashed us right and left out of the town, although we rallied three times and came in again. At any rate, it's the first time for the last five years that they dare go up and down the street calling out for the face of a Murphy or a Kelly—for they're as bitter now agin us as agin the Murphys themselves.'

"'Well, I hope, Denis,' I observed, 'that what occurred yesterday will prevent you from entering into their quarrels in future. Indeed, I shall not give over until I prevail on you to lead a quiet and peaceable life, as the father of a rising family ought to do.'

"'Denis,' said the wife, when I alluded to the children, looking at him with a reproachful and significant expression—'Denis, do you hear that?—the father of a family, Denis! Oh, then, God look down on that family, but it's—*Musha*, God bless you and yours, sir,' said she to me, dropping that part of the subject abruptly. 'It's kind of you to trouble yourself about him, at all, at all; it's what them that has a betther right to do it doesn't do.'

"'I hope,' said I, 'that Denis's own good sense will show

him the folly and guilt of his conduct, and that he will not, under any circumstances, enter into their battles in future. Come, Denis, will you promise me this?'

"'If any man,' replied Denis, 'could make me do it, it's yourself, sir, or any one of your family; but if the priest of the parish was to go down on his two knees before me, I wouldn't give it up till we give them vagabone Caseys one glorious battherin', which, plase God, we'll do, and are well able to do, before a month of Sundays goes over us. Now, sir, you needn't say another word,' said he, seeing me about to speak, 'for, by Him that made me, we'll do it. If any man, I say, could persuade me agin it, you could; but if we don't pay them full interest for what we got, why, my name's not Denis Kelly—ay, sweep them like varmint out of the town, body and sleeves!'

"I saw argument would be lost on him, so I only observed that I feared it would eventually end badly.

"'Och, many and many's the time, Mr. Darcy,' said Honor, 'I prophesied the same thing; and if God hasn't said it, he'll be coming home a corpse to me some day or other, for he got as much bating, sir, as would be enough to kill a horse; and to tell you God's truth, sir, he's breeding up his childher——'

"'Honor,' said Kelly, irritated, 'whatever I do, do I lave it in your power to say that I'm a bad husband? so don't rise me by your talk, for I don't like to be provoked. I know it's wrong, but what can I do? Would you have me for to show the *garran bane*,[1] and lave them like a cowardly thraitor, now that the other faction is coming up to be their match? No; let what will come of it, I'll never do the mane thing—death before dishonour!'

"In this manner Kelly went on for years—sometimes, indeed, keeping quiet for a short period, but eventually drawn in, from the apprehension of being reproached with want of honour and truth to his connection. This, truly, is an imputation which no peasant could endure; nor, were he thought capable of treachery, would his life be worth a single

[1] The white horse, *i.e.*, be wanting in mettle. Carleton says the origin of the phrase is attributable to the tradition that James II. fled from the field at the Boyne on a white horse.

week's purchase. Many a time have I seen Kelly reeling home, his head and face sadly cut, the blood streaming from him, and his wife and some neighbour on each side of him — the poor woman weeping, and deploring the senseless and sanguinary feuds in which her husband took so active a part.

"About three miles from this, down at the Long Ridge, where the Shannons live, dwelt a family of the M'Guigans, cousins to Denis. They were anything but industrious, although they might have lived very independently, having held a farm on what they call an old take, which means a long lease taken out when the lands were cheap. It so happened, however, that, like too many of their countrymen, they paid little attention to the cultivation of their farm, the consequence of which neglect was that they became embarrassed and overburdened with arrears. Their landlord was old Sam Simmons, whose only fault to his tenants was an excess of indulgence, and a generous disposition, wherever he could possibly get an opportunity, to scatter his money about him, upon the spur of a benevolence which it would seem never ceased goading him to acts of the most Christian liberality and kindness. Along with these excellent qualities, he was remarkable for a most rooted aversion to law and lawyers; for he would lose one hundred pounds rather than recover that sum by legal proceedings, even when certain that five pounds would effect it; but he seldom or never was known to pardon a breach of the peace.

"I have always found that an excess of indulgence in a landlord never fails ultimately to injure and relax the industry of the tenant; at least, this was the effect which his forbearance produced on them. But the most extraordinary good-nature has its limits, and so had his; after repeated warning, and the most unparalleled patience on his part, he was at length compelled to determine on at once removing them from his estate, and letting his land to some more efficient and deserving tenant. He accordingly desired them to remove their property from the premises, as he did not wish, he said, to leave them without the means of entering upon another farm, if they felt so disposed. This they refused to do, adding that they would at least put him to the

expense of ejecting them. He then gave orders to his agent to seize; but they, in the meantime, had secreted their effects by night among their friends and relations, sending a cow to this one, and a horse to that; so that when the bailiff came to levy his execution he found very little except the empty walls. They were, however, ejected without ceremony, and driven altogether off the farm, for which they had actually paid nothing for the three preceding years. In the meantime the farm was advertised to be let, and several persons had offered themselves as tenants; but what appeared very remarkable was that the Roman Catholics seldom came a second time to make any further inquiry about it; or if they did, Simmons observed that they were sure to withdraw their proposals, and ultimately decline having anything to do with it.

"This was a circumstance which he could not properly understand; but the fact was that the peasantry were, to a man, members of a widely-extending system of Whiteboyism, the secret influence of which intimidated such of their own religion as intended to take it, and prevented them from exposing themselves to the penalty which they knew those who should dare to occupy it must pay. In a short time, however, the matter began to be whispered about, until it spread gradually, day after day, through the parish, that those who already had proposed, or intended to propose, were afraid to enter upon the land on any terms. Hitherto, it is true, these threats floated about only in the invisible form of rumour.

"The farm had been now unoccupied for about a year. Party spirit ran very high among the peasantry, and no proposals came in, or were at all likely to come. Simmons then got advertisements printed, and had them posted up in the most conspicuous parts of this and the neighbouring parishes. It was expected, however, that they would be torn down; but, instead of that, there was a written notice posted up immediately under each, which ran in the following words:—

"'TAKE NOTESS.

"'*Any man that'll dare to take the farm belonging to yallow Sam Simmons, and sitivated at the long ridge, will be flayed alive.*

"'MAT MIDNIGHT.

"'N.B.—*It's it that was latterally occupied by the M'Guigans.*'

"This occasioned Simmons and the other magistrates of the barony to hold a meeting, at which they subscribed to the amount of fifty pounds as a reward for discovering the author or authors of the threatening notice; but the advertisement containing the reward, which was posted in the usual places through the parish, was torn down on the first night after it was put up. In the meantime a man nicknamed Vengeance—Vesey Vengeance, in consequence of his daring and fearless spirit, and his bitterness in retaliating injury—came to Simmons, and proposed for the farm. The latter candidly mentioned the circumstances of the notice, and fairly told him that he was running a personal risk in taking it.

"'Leave that to me, sir,' said Vengeance; 'if you will set me the farm at the terms I offer, I am willing to become your tenant; and let them that posted up the notices go to old Nick, or if they annoy me, let them take care I don't send them there. I am a true-blue, sir—a purple man [1]—have lots of firearms, and plenty of stout fellows in the parish ready and willing to back me; and, by the light of day! if they make or meddle with me or mine, we will hunt them in the face of the world, like so many mad dogs, out of the country. What are they but a pack of ribils, that would cut our throats if they dared!'

"'I have no objection,' said Simmons, 'that you should express a firm determination to defend your life and protect your property; but I utterly condemn the spirit with which you seem to be animated. Be temperate and sober, but be firm. I will afford you every assistance and protection in my

[1] These terms denote certain stages of initiation in the Orange system.

power, both as a magistrate and a landlord; but if you speak so incautiously, the result may be serious, if not fatal, to yourself.'

"'Instead of that,' said Vengeance, 'the more a man appears to be afeard, the more danger he is in, as I know by what I have seen; but, at any rate, if they injure me, I wouldn't ask better sport than taking down the ribils—the bloody-minded villains! Isn't it a purty thing that a man darn't put one foot past the other, only as they wish? By the light of day, I'll pepper them!'

Shortly after this, Vengeance, braving all their threats, removed to the farm, and set about its cultivation with skill and vigour. He had not been long there, however, when a notice was posted one night on his door, giving him ten days to clear off from this interdicted spot, threatening, in case of non-compliance, to make a bonfire of the house and offices, inmates included. The reply which Vengeance made to this was fearless and characteristic. He wrote another notice, which he posted on the chapel door, stating that he would not budge an inch—recommending, at the same time, such as intended paying him a nightly visit to be careful that they might not chance to go home with their heels foremost. This indeed was setting them completely at defiance, and would no doubt have been fatal to Vesey, were it not for a circumstance which I will now relate. In a little dell below Vesey's house lived a poor woman called Doran, a widow; she inhabited a small hut, and was principally supported by her two sons, who were servants—one to a neighbouring farmer, a Roman Catholic, and the other to Dr. Ableson, rector of the parish. He who had been with the rector lost his health shortly before Vengeance succeeded the M'Guigans as occupier of the land in question, and was obliged to come home to his mother. He was then confined to his bed, from which, indeed, he never rose.

"This boy had been his mother's principal support—for the other was unsettled, and paid her but little attention, being, like most of those in his situation, fond of drinking, dancing, and attending fairs. In short, he became a Ribbonman, and consequently was obliged to attend their nightly meetings. Now it so happened that for a considerable time

after the threatening notice had been posted on Vengeance's door, he received no annoyance, although the period allowed for his departure had been long past, and the purport of the paper uncomplied with. Whether this proceeded from an apprehension on the part of the Ribbonmen of receiving a warmer welcome than they might wish, or whether they deferred the execution of their threat until Vengeance might be off his guard, I cannot determine; but the fact is that some months had elapsed and Vengeance remained hitherto unmolested.

"During this interval the distress of Widow Doran had become known to the inmates of his family, and his mother —for she lived with him—used to bring down each day some nourishing food to the sick boy. In these kind offices she was very punctual; and so great was the poverty of the poor widow, and so destitute the situation of her sick son, that, in fact, the burden of their support lay principally upon Vengeance's family.

"Vengeance was a small, thin man, with fair hair and fiery eyes; his voice was loud and shrill, his utterance rapid, and the general expression of his countenance irritable; his motions were so quick that he rather seemed to run than walk. He was a civil, obliging neighbour, but performed his best actions with a bad grace; a firm, unflinching friend, but a bitter and implacable enemy. Upon the whole, he was generally esteemed and respected—though considered as an eccentric character, for such, indeed, he was. On hearing of Widow Doran's distress, he gave orders that a portion of each meal should be regularly sent down to her and her son; and from that period forward they were both supported principally from his table.

"In this way some months had passed, and still Vengeance was undisturbed in his farm. It often happened, however, that Doran's other son came to see his brother; and during these visits it was but natural that his mother and brother should allude to the kindness which they daily experienced from Vesey.

"One night, about twelve o'clock, a tap came to Widow Doran's door, who happened to be attending the invalid, as he was then nearly in the last stage of his illness. When she

opened it, the other son entered, in an evident hurry, having the appearance of a man who felt deep and serious anxiety.

"'Mother,' said he, 'I was very uneasy entirely about Mick, and just started over to see him, although they don't know at home that I'm out, so I can't stay a crack; but I wish you would go to the door for two or three minutes, as I have something to say to him.'

"'Why, thin, Holy Mother!—Jack, *ahagur*, is there anything the matther, for you look as if you had seen something?'[1]

"'Nothing worse than myself, mother,' he replied; 'nor there's nothing the matther at all—only I have a few words to say to Mick here, that's all.'

"The mother accordingly removed herself out of hearing.

"'Mick,' says the boy, 'this is a bad business—I wish to God I was clear and clane out of it.'

"'What is it?' said Mick, alarmed.

"'Murther, I'm afeard, if God doesn't turn it off them somehow.'

"'What do you mane, man, at all?' said the invalid, raising himself, in deep emotion, on his elbow, from his poor straw bed.

"'Vengeance,' said he—'Vengeance, man—he's going to get it. I was out with the boys on Sunday evening, and at last it's agreed on to visit him to-morrow night. I'm sure and sartin he'll never escape, for there's more in for him than taking the farm, and daring them so often as he did—he shot two fingers off of a brother-in-law of Jem Reilly's one night that they war on for threshing him, and that's coming home to him along with the rest.'

"'In the name of God, Jack,' inquired Mick, 'what do you intend to do with him?'

"'Why,' replied Jack, 'it's agreed to put a coal in the thatch, in the first place; and although they were afeard to name what he's to get besides, I doubt they'll make a spatchcock of himself. They won't meddle with any other of the family, though—but he's down for it.'

"'Are you to be one of them?' asked Mick.

[1] *Something—i.e.*, a ghost or such-like.

"'I was the third man named,' replied the other, 'bekase, they said, I knew the place.'

"'Jack,' said his emaciated brother, with much solemnity, raising himself up in the bed—'Jack, if you have act or part in that bloody business, God in His glory you'll never see. Fly the country—cut off a finger or toe—break your arm—or do something that may prevent you from being there. Oh, my God!' he exclaimed, whilst the tears fell fast down his pale cheeks—'to go to murdher the man, and lave his little family widout a head or a father over them, and his wife a widow! To burn his place, widout rhyme, or rason, or offince. Jack, if you go, I'll die cursing you. I'll appear to you—I'll let you rest neither night nor day, sleeping nor waking, in bed or out of bed. I'll haunt you till you'll curse the very day you war born.'

"'Whisht, Micky,' said Jack, 'you're frightening me. I'll not go—will that satisfy you?'

"'Well, dhrop down on your two knees there,' said Micky, 'and swear, before the God that has His eye upon you, this minute, that you'll have no hand in injuring him or his while you live. If you don't do this, I'll not rest in my grave, and maybe I'll be a corpse before mornin'.'

"'Well, Micky,' said Jack, who, though wild and unthinking, was a lad whose heart and affections were good, 'it would be hard for me to refuse you that much, and you not likely to be long with me—I will,' and he accordingly knelt down and swore solemnly, in words which his brother dictated to him, that he would not be concerned in the intended murder.

"'Now give me your hand, Jack,' said the invalid; 'God bless you—and so He will. Jack, if I depart before I see you again, I'll die happy. That man has supported me and my mother for near the last three months, bad as you all think him. Why, Jack, we would both be dead of hunger long ago, only for his family—and, my God! to think of such a murdhering intention makes my blood run cowld.'

"'You had better give him a hint, then,' said Jack, 'some way, or he'll be done for, as sure as you're stretched on that bed; but don't mintion names, if you wish to keep me from being murdhered for what I did. I must be off now, for I

stole out of the barn ;[1] and only that Atty Laghy's gone along wid the master to the —— fair, to help him sell the two coults, I couldn't get over at all.'

"'Well, go home, Jack, and God bless you, and so He will, for what you did this night.'

"Jack accordingly departed after bidding his mother and brother farewell.

"When the old woman came in, she asked her son if there was anything wrong with his brother; but he replied that there was not.

"'Nothing at all,' said he ; 'but will you go up airly in the morning, plase God, and tell Vesey Johnston that I want to see him ; and—that—I have a great dale to say to him.'

"'To be sure I will, Micky ; but, Lord guard us, what ails you, *avourneen*, you look so frightened ?'

"'Nothing at all, at all, mother ; but will you go where I say airly to-morrow, for me ?'

"'It's the first thing I'll do, God willin',' replied the mother. And the next morning Vesey was down with the invalid very early, for the old woman kept her word, and paid him a timely visit.

"'Well, Micky, my boy,' said Vengeance, as he entered the hut, 'I hope you're no worse this morning.'

"'Not worse, sir,' replied Mick ; 'nor, indeed, am I anything better either, but much the same way. Sure, it's I that knows very well that my time here is but short.'

"'Well, Mick, my boy,' said Vengeance, 'I hope you're prepared for death, and that you expect forgiveness, like a Christian. Look up, my boy, to God at once, and pitch the priests and their craft to ould Nick, where they'll all go at the long-run.'

"'I blieve,' said Mick, with a faint smile, 'that you're not very fond of the priests, Mr. Johnston ; but if you knew the power they possess as well as I do, you wouldn't spake of them so bad, anyhow.'

"'Me fond of them !' replied the other ; 'why, man, they're a set of the most gluttonous, black-looking hypocrites that ever walked on neat's leather, and ought to be hunted out of

[1] Labouring servants in Ireland usually sleep in barns.

the country—hunted out of the country, by the light of day, every one of them ; for they do nothing but egg up the people against the Protestants.'

"'God help you, Mr. Johnston,' replied the invalid; 'I pity you from my heart for the opinion you hould about the blessed crathurs. I suppose if you were sthruck dead on the spot wid a blast from the fairies, that you think a priest couldn't cure you by one word's spaking?'

"'Cure me!' said Vengeance, with a laugh of disdain ; 'by the light of day, if I caught one of them curing me, I'd give him the purtiest chase you ever saw in your life across the hills.'

"'Don't you know,' said Mick, 'that priest Dannelly cured Bob Arthurs of the falling sickness, until he broke the vow that was laid upon him of not going into a church ; and the minute he crossed the church-door didn't he dhrop down as bad as ever—and what could the minister do for him?'

"'And don't *you* know,' rejoined Vengeance, 'that that's all a parcel of the most lying stuff possible—lies—lies—all lies —and vagabondism. Why, Mick, you Papishes worship the priests ; you think they can bring you to heaven at a word. By the light of day, they must have good sport laughing at you when they get among one another. Why don't they teach you, and give you the Bible to read, the ribelly rascals?—but they're afraid you'd know too much then.'

"'Well, Mr. Johnston,' said Mick, 'I blieve you'll never have a good opinion of them, at any rate.'

"'Ay, when the sky falls,' replied Vengeance; 'but you're now on your deathbed, and why don't you pitch them to ould Nick, and get a Bible? Get a Bible, man. There's a pair of them in my house that's never used at all—except my mother's, and she's at it night and day. I'll send one of them down to you. Turn yourself to God—to your Redeemer, that died on the mount of Jehoshaphat, or somewhere about Jerusalem, for your sins—and don't go out of the world from the hand of a rascally priest, with a band about your eyes, as if you were at blind-man's-buff; for, by the light of day, you're as blind as a bat in a religious way."

"'There's no use in sending me a Bible,' replied the invalid, 'for I can't read it; but, whatever you may think, I'm very willing to lave my salvation with my priest.'

"'Why, man,' observed Vengeance, 'I thought you were going to have sense at last, and that you sent for me to give you some spiritual consolation.'

"'No, sir,' replied Mick; 'I have two or three words to spake to you.'

"'Come, come, Mick; now that we're on a spiritual subject, I'll hear nothing from you till I try whether it's possible to give you a true insight into religion. Stop, now, and let us lay our heads together, that we may make out something of a dacenter creed for you to believe in than the one you profess. Tell me truth, do you believe in the priests?'

"'How?' replied Mick. 'I believe that they're holy men; but I know they can't save me widout the Redeemer and His blessed mother.'

"'By the light above us, you're shuffling, Mick; I say you do believe in them—now don't tell me to the contrary—I say you're shuffling as fast as possible.'

"'I tould you truth, sir,' replied Mick; 'and if you don't blieve me, I can't help it.'

"'Don't trust in the priests, Mick; that's the main point to secure your salvation.'

"Mick, who knew his prejudices against the priests, smiled faintly, and replied—

"'Why, sir, I trust in them as being able to make inthercession wid God for me, that's all.'

"'They make intercession! By the stool I'm sitting on, a single word from one of them would ruin you. They, a set of ribles, to make interest for you in heaven! Didn't they rise the rebellion in Ireland?—answer me that.'

"'This is a subject, sir, we would never agree on,' replied Mick.

"'Have you the Ten Commandments?' inquired Vesey.

"'I doubt my mimory's not clear enough to have them in my mind,' said the lad, feeling keenly the imputation of ignorance which he apprehended from Vesey's blunt observations.

"Vesey, however, had penetration enough to perceive his feelings, and, with more delicacy than could be expected from him, immediately moved the question.

"'No matter, Mick,' said he; 'if you would give up the

priests, we would get over that point. As it is, I'll give you a lift in the Commandments; and, as I said a while ago, if you take my advice, I'll work up a creed for you that you may depend upon. But now for the Commandments. Let me see.

"'First: Thou shalt have no other gods but Me. Don't you see, man, how that peppers the priests?

"'Second: Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

"'Third: Thou shalt not make to thyself—no—hang it, no—I'm out; that's the Second—very right. Third: Honour thy father and thy mother—you understand that, Mick? It means that you are bound to—to—just so—to honour your father and your mother, poor woman.'

"'My father—God be good to him—is dead near fourteen years, sir,' replied Mick.

"'Well, in that case, Mick, you see all that's left for you is to honour your mother—although I'm not certain of that either; the Commandments make no allowance at all for death, and in that case, why, living or dead, the surest way is to respect and obey them—that is—if the thing weren't impossible. I wish we had blind George M'Gin here, Mick; although he's as great a rogue as ever escaped hemp, yet he'd beat the devil himself at a knotty point.'

"'His breath would be bad about a dying man,' observed Mick.

"'Ay, or a living one,' said Vesey. 'However, let us get on—we were at the Third. Fourth: Thou shalt do no murder.'

"At the word murder, Mick started, and gave a deep groan, whilst his eyes and features assumed a great and hollow expression, resembling that of a man struck with an immediate sense of horror and affright.

"'Oh, for heaven's sake, sir, stop there!' said Doran; 'that brings to my mind the business I had with you, Mr. Johnston.'

"'What is it about?' inquired Vengeance, in his usual eager manner.

"'Do you mind,' said Mick, 'that a paper was stuck one night upon your door, threatening you if you wouldn't lave that farm you're in?'

"'I do—the bloodthirsty villains! but they knew a trick worth two of coming near me.'

"'Well,' said Mick, 'a strange man, that I had never seen before, come into me last night, and tould me, if I'd see you, to say that you would get a visit from the boys this night, and to take care of yourself.'

"'Give me the hand, Mick,' said Vengeance—'give me the hand. In spite of the priests, by the light of day, you're an honest fellow. This night, you say, they're to come? And what are the bloody wretches to do, Mick? But I needn't ask that, for I suppose it's to murder myself, and to burn my place.'

"'I'm afeard, sir, you're not far from the truth,' replied Mick. 'But, Mr. Johnston, for God's sake, don't mintion my name; for if you do, I'll get myself what they war laying out for you—be burned in my bed, maybe.'

"'Never fear, Mick,' replied Vengeance; 'your name will never cross my lips.'

"'It's a great thing,' said Mick, 'that would make me turn informer; but, sure, only for your kindness and the goodness of your family, the Lord spare you to one another, mightn't I be dead long ago? I couldn't have one minute's peace if you or yours came to any harm when I could prevint it.'

"'Say no more, Mick,' said Vengeance, taking his hand again. 'I know that; leave the rest to me. But how do you find yourself, my poor fellow? you look weaker than you did a good deal.'

"'Indeed, I'm going very fast, sir,' replied Mick; 'I know it'll soon be over with me.'

"'Hut, no, man,' said Vengeance, drawing his hand rapidly across his eyes, and clearing his voice. 'Not at all; don't say so. Would a little broth serve you? or a bit of fresh meat?—or would you have a fancy for anything that I could make out for you? I'll get you wine, if you think it would do you good.'

"'God reward you,' said Mick feebly—'God reward you, and open your eyes to the truth. Is my mother likely to come in, do you think?'

"'She must be here in a few minutes,' the other replied;

'she was waiting till they'd churn, that she might bring you down a little fresh milk and butter.'

"'I wish she was wid me,' said the poor lad, 'for I'm lonely wantin' her—her voice and the very touch of her hands goes to my heart. Mother, come to me—and let me lay my head upon your breast, *agra machree*, for I think it will be for the last time. We lived lonely, *avourneen*, wid none but ourselves—sometimes in happiness, when the nabours ud be kind to us; and sometimes in sorrow, when there ud be none to help us. It's all over now, mother, and I'm laving you for ever.'

"Vengeance wiped his eyes. 'Rouse yourself, Mick,' said he—'rouse yourself.'

"'Who is that sitting along with you on the stool?' said Mick.

"'No one,' replied his neighbour—'but what's the matter with you, Mick?—your face is changed.'

"Mick, however, made no reply; but after a few slight struggles, in which he attempted to call upon his mother's name, he breathed his last. When Vengeance saw that he was dead—looked upon the cold, miserable hut in which this grateful and affectionate young man was stretched—and then reflected on the important service he had just rendered him, he could not suppress his tears.

"After sending down some of the females to assist his poor mother in laying him out, Vengeance went among his friends and acquaintances, informing them of the intelligence he had received, without mentioning the source from which he had it. After dusk that evening they all flocked as privately as possible to his house, to the number of thirty or forty, well provided with arms and ammunition. Some of them stationed themselves in the outhouses, some behind the garden hedge, and others in the dwelling-house."

When my brother had got thus far in his narrative, a tap came to the parlour-door, and immediately a stout-looking man, having the appearance of a labourer, entered the room.

"Well, Lachlin," said my brother, "what's the matter?"

"Why, sir," said Lachlin, scratching his head, "I had a bit of a favour to ax, if it would be plasin' to you to grant it to me."

"What is that?" said my brother.

"Do you know, sir," said he, "I haven't been at a wake—let us see—this two or three years, anyhow, and if you'd have no objection, why, I'd slip up a while to Denis Kelly's; he's a distant relation of my own, sir; and blood's thicker than wather, you know."

"I'm just glad you came in, Lachlin," said my brother. "I didn't think of you—take a chair here, and never heed the wake to-night, but sit down and tell us about the attack on Vesey Vengeance long ago. I'll get you a tumbler of punch; and instead of going to the wake, I will allow you to go to the funeral to-morrow."

"Ah, sir," said Lachlin, "you know whenever the punch is consarned I'm aisily persuaded; but not making little of your tumbler, sir," said the shrewd fellow, "I would get two or three of them if I went to the wake."

"Well, sit down," said my brother, handing him one, "and we won't permit you to get thirsty while you're talking, at all events."

"In throth, you haven't your heart in the likes of it," said Lachlin. "Gintlemen, your healths—your health, sir, and we're happy to see you wanst more. Why, thin, I remember you, sir, when you were a *gorsoon*, passing to school wid your satchel on your back; but, I'll be bound, you're by no means as soople now as you were thin. Why, sir," turning to my brother, "he could fly, or kick football wid the rabbits. Well, this is raal stuff!"

"Now, Lachlin," said my brother, "give us an account of the attack you made on Vesey Vengeance's house at the Long Ridge, when all your party were chased out of the town."

"Why, thin, sir, I ought to be ashamed to mintion it; but you see, gintlemen, there was no getting over being connected wid them, for a man's life wouldn't be his own if he refused—but I hope your brother's safe, sir!"

"Oh, perfectly safe, Lachlin; you may rest assured he'll never mention it."

"Well, sir," said Lachlin, addressing himself to me, "Vesey Vengeance was——"

"Lachlin," said my brother, "he knows all about Vesey; just give an account of the attack."

"The attack, sir!—no, but the chivey we got over the mountains. Why, sir, we met in an ould empty house, you see, that belonged to the Farrells of Ballyboulteen, that went over to America that spring. There war none wid us, you may be sure, but them that war up; and in all we might be about sixty or seventy. The M'Guigans, one way or another, got it up first among them, bekase they expected that Mr. Simmons would take them back when he'd find that no one else dare venthur upon their land. There war at that time two fellows down from the county Longford, in their neighbourhood, of the name of Collier—although that wasn't their right name—they were here upon their keeping, for the murder of a proctor in their own part of the country. One of them was a tall, powerful fellow, with sandy hair and red brows; the other was a slender chap, that must have been drawn into it by his brother—for he was very mild and innocent, and always persuaded us agin evil. The M'Guigans brought lashings of whisky, and made them that war to go foremost amost drunk—these war the two Colliers, some of the strangers from behind the mountains, and a son of Widdy Doran's, that knew every inch about the place, for he was bred and born jist below the house a bit. He wasn't wid us, however, in regard of his brother being under boord that night; but instid of him Tim M'Guigan went to show the way up the little glin to the house—though, for that matther, the most of us knew as well as he did, but we didn't like to be the first to put a hand to it if we could help it.

"At any rate, we sot in Farrell's empty house, drinking whisky, till they war all gathered, when about two dozen of them got the damp soot from the chimley, and rubbed it over their faces, making them so black that their own relations couldn't know them. We then went across the country in little lots of about six, or ten, or a score; and we war glad that the wake was in Widdy Doran's, seeing that if any one would meet us, we war going to it, you know, and the blackening of the faces would pass for a frolic; but there was no great danger of being met, for it was now long beyant midnight.

"Well, gintlemen, it puts me into a tremble, even at this time, to think of how little we cared about doing what we

were bent upon. Them that had to manage the business war more than half drunk; and hard fortune to me, but you would think it was to a wedding they went—some of them singing songs aginst the law—some of them quite merry, and laughing as if they had found a mare's nest. The big fellow, Collier, had a dark lanthern wid a half-burned turf in it, to light the bonfire, as they said; others had guns and pistols, some of them charged, and some of them not; some had bagnets and ould rusty swords, pitchforks, and so on. Myself had nothing in my hand but the flail I was thrashing wid that day—and, to tell the thruth, the divil a step I would have gone with them, only for fraid of my health; for, as I said a while agone, if any discovery was made afterwards, them that promised to go and turned tail would be marked as the informers. Neither was I so blind but I could see that there war plenty there that would stay away if they durst.

"Well, we went on till we came to a little dark corner below the house, where we met, and held a council of war upon what we should do. Collier and the other strangers from behind the mountains war to go first, and the rest war to stand round the house at a distance — he carried the lantern, a bagnet, and a horse pistol; and half a dozen more war to bring over bottles of straw from Vengeance's own hagyard, to hould up to the thatch. It's all past and gone now—but three of the Reillys were desperate against Vesey that night, particularly one of them that he had shot about a year and a half before—that is, peppered two of the right-hand fingers off of him one night in a scuffle as Vesey came home from an Orange-lodge. Well, all went on purty fair; we had got as far as the outhouses, where we stopped to see if we could hear any noise, but all was quiet as you plase.

"'Now, Vengeance,' says Reilly, swearing a terrible oath out of him—'you murdering Orange villain, you're going to get your pay,' says he.

"'Ay,' says M'Guigan, 'what he often threatened to others, he'll soon meet himself, plase God. Come, boys,' says he, 'bring the straw and light it, and just lay it up, my darlings, nicely to the thatch here, and ye'll see what a glorious bonfire we'll have of the black Orange villain's blankets in less than no time.'

"Some of us could hardly stand this. 'Stop, boys,' cried one of Dan Slevin's sons—'stop; Vengeance is bad enough, but his wife and childher never offended us—we'll not burn the place.'

"'No,' said others, spaking out when they heard anybody at all having courage to do so—'it's too bad, boys, to burn the place; for if we do,' says they, 'some of the innocent may be burned before they get out from the house, or even before they waken out of their sleep.'

"'Knock at the door first,' says Slevin, 'and bring Vengeance out; let us cut the ears off his head, and lave him.'

"'Damn him!' says another, 'let us not take the vagabone's life; it's enough to take the ears from him, and to give him a prod or two of a bagnet on the ribs; but don't kill him.'

"'Well, well,' says Reilly, 'let us knock at the door, and get himself and the family out,' says he, 'and then we'll see what can be done wid him.'

"'Tattheration to me,' says the big Longford fellow, 'if he had sarved me, Reilly, as he did you, but I'd roast him in the flames of his own house,' says he.

"'I'd have you to know,' says Slevin, 'that you have no command here, Collier. I'm captain at the present time,' says he, 'and more nor what I wish shall not be done. Go over,' says he to the black faces, 'and rap him up.'

"Accordingly, they began to knock at the door, commanding Vengeance to get up and come out to them.

"'Come, Vengeance,' says Collier, 'put on you, my good fellow, and come out till two or three of your neighbours, that wish you well, gets a sight of your purty face, you babe of grace!'

"'Who are you that wants me at all?' says Vengeance from within.

"'Come out first,' says Collier—'a few friends that has a crow to pluck with you. Walk out, *avourneen;* or if you'd rather be roasted alive, why, you may stay where you are,' says he.

"'Gentlemen,' says Vengeance, 'I have never, to my knowledge, offinded any of you; and I hope you won't be so cruel as to take an industrious, hard-working man from his

family, in the clouds of the night, to do him an injury. Go home, gentlemen, in the name of God, and let me and mine alone. You're all mighty dacent gentlemen, you know, and I'm determined never to make or meddle with any of you. Sure, I know right well it's purtecting me you would be, dacent gentlemen. But I don't think there's any of my neighbours there, or they wouldn't stand by and see me injured.'

"'Thrue for you, *avick*,' says they, giving at the same time a terrible pattherrara agin the door with two or three big stones.

"'Stop, stop!' says Vengeance, 'don't break the door, and I'll open it. I know you're merciful, dacent gentlemen—I know you're merciful.'

"So the thief came and unbarred it quietly, and the next minute about a dozen of them that war within the house let slap at us. As God would have had it, the crowd didn't happen to be fornenst the door, or numbers of them would have been shot; and the night was dark, too, which was in our favour. The first volley was scarcely over when there was another slap from the outhouses; and, after that, another from the gardens; and, after that, to be sure, we took to our scrapers. Several of them were badly wounded; but as for Collier, he was shot dead, and M'Guigan was taken prisoner, with five more, on the spot. There never was such a chase as we got; and only that they thought there was more of us in it, they might have tuck most of us prisoners.

"'Fly, boys!' says M'Guigan, as soon as they fired out of the house—'we've been sould,' says he, 'but I'll die game, anyhow'—and so he did, poor fellow; for although he and the other four war transported, one of them never sould the pass or stagged. Not but that they might have done it, for all that; only that there was a whisper sent to them that if they did, a single sowl belonging to one of them wouldn't be left living. The M'Guigans were cousins of Denis Kelly's, that's now laid out there above.

"From the time this tuck place till after the 'sizes, there wasn't a stir among them on any side; but when they war over, the boys began to prepare. Denis—heavens be his bed—was there in his glory. This was in the spring 'sizes, and the

May fair soon followed. Ah! that was the bloody sight, I'm tould—for I wasn't at it—atween the Orangemen and them. The Ribbonmen war bate, though, but not till after there was a desperate fight on both sides. I was tould that Denis Kelly that day knocked down five-and-twenty men in about three-quarters of an hour; and only that long John Grimes hot him a *polthoge* on the sconce with the butt-end of the gun, it was thought the Orangemen would be beat. That blow broke his skull, and was the manes of his death. He was carried home senseless."

"Well, Lachlin," said my brother, "if you didn't see it, I did. I happened to be looking out of John Carson's upper window; for it wasn't altogether safe to contemplate it within reach of the missiles. It was certainly a dreadful and a barbarous sight. You have often observed the calm, gloomy silence that precedes a thunderstorm; and had you been there that day you might have seen it illustrated in a scene much more awful. The thick living mass of people extended from the corner-house, nearly a quarter of a mile, at this end of the town, up to the parsonage on the other side. During the early part of the day every kind of business was carried on in a hurry and an impatience which denoted the little chance they knew there would be for transacting it in the evening.

"Up to the hour of four o'clock the fair was unusually quiet, and, on the whole, presented nothing in any way remarkable; but after that hour you might observe the busy stir and hum of the mass settling down into a deep, brooding, portentous silence, that was absolutely fearful. The females, with dismay and terror pictured in their faces, hurried home; and in various instances you might see mothers, and wives, and sisters clinging about the sons, husbands, and brothers, attempting to drag them by main force from the danger which they knew impended over them. In this they seldom succeeded; for the person so urged was usually compelled to tear himself from them by superior strength.

"The pedlars, and basket-women, and such as had tables and standings erected in the streets, commenced removing them with all possible haste. The shopkeepers and other inhabitants of the town put up their shutters, in order to

secure their windows from being shattered. Strangers who were compelled to stop in town that night, took shelter in the inns and other houses of entertainment where they lodged ; so that about five o'clock the street was completely clear and free for action.

"Hitherto there was not a stroke—the scene became even more silent and gloomy, although the moral darkness of their ill-suppressed passions was strongly contrasted with the splendour of the sun, that poured down a tide of golden light upon the multitude. This contrast between the natural brightness of the evening and the internal gloom of their hearts, as the beams of the sun rested upon the ever-moving crowd, would, to any man who knew the impetuosity with which the spirit of religious hatred was soon to rage among them, produce novel and singular sensations. For, after all, Toby, there is a mysterious connection between natural and moral things, which often invests both nature and sentiment with a feeling that certainly would not come home to our hearts if such a connection did not exist. A rose-tree beside a grave will lead us from sentiment to reflection; and any other association where a painful or melancholy thought is clothed with a garb of joy or pleasure, will strike us more deeply in proportion as the contrast is strong. On seeing the sun or moon struggling through the darkness of surrounding clouds, I confess, although you may smile, that I feel for the moment a diminution of enjoyment—something taken, as it were, from the sum of my happiness.

"Ere the quarrel commenced you might see a dark and hateful glare scowling from the countenances of the two parties as they viewed and approached each other in the street—the eye was set in deadly animosity, and the face marked with an ireful paleness, occasioned at once by revenge and apprehension. Groups were silently hurrying with an eager and energetic step to their places of rendezvous, grasping their weapons more closely, or grinding their teeth in the impatience of their fury. The veterans on each side were surrounded by their respective followers, anxious to act under their direction; and the very boys seemed to be animated with a martial spirit much more eager than that of those who had greater experience in party quarrels.

"Jem Finigan's public-house was the headquarters and rallying-point of the Ribbonmen; the Orangemen assembled in that of Joe Sherlock, the master of an Orange-lodge. About six o'clock the crowd in the street began gradually to fall off to the opposite ends of the town—the Roman Catholics towards the north, the Protestants towards the south. Carson's window, from which I was observing their motions, was exactly half-way between them, so that I had a distinct view of both. At this moment I noticed Denis Kelly coming forward from the closely condensed mass formed by the Ribbonmen; he advanced with his cravat off, to the middle of the vacant space between the parties, holding a fine oak cudgel in his hand. He then stopped, and addressing the Orangemen, said—

"'Where's Vengeance and his crew now? Is there any single Orange villain among you that dare come down and meet me here like a man? Is John Grimes there? for if he is, before we begin to take you out of a face—to hunt you altogether out of the town, ye Orange villains—I would be glad that he'd step down to Denis Kelly here for two or three minutes—I'll not keep him longer.'

"There was now a stir and a murmur among the Orangemen, as if a rush was about to take place towards Denis; but Grimes, whom I saw endeavouring to curb them in, left the crowd and advanced towards him.

"At this moment an instinctive movement among both masses took place; so that when Grimes had come within a few yards of Kelly, both parties were within two or three perches of them. Kelly was standing apparently off his guard, with one hand thrust carelessly into the breast of his waistcoat, and the cudgel in the other; but his eye was fixed calmly upon Grimes as he approached. They were both powerful, fine men—brawny, vigorous, and active. Grimes had somewhat the advantage of the other in height; he also fought with his left hand, from which circumstance he was nicknamed *Kitthogue*. He was a man of a dark, stern-looking countenance; and the tones of his voice were deep, sullen, and of appalling strength.

"As they approached each other, the windows on each side of the street were crowded; but there was not a breath to be

heard in any direction, nor from either party. As for myself, my heart palpitated with anxiety. What they might have felt, I do not know; but they must both have experienced considerable apprehension; for as they were the champions of their respective parties, and had never before met in single encounter, their characters depended on the issue of the contest.

"'Well, Grimes,' said Denis, 'sure, I've often wished for this same meetin', man, betune myself and you; I have what you're going to get in for you this long time; but you'll get it now, *avick*, plase God.'

"'It was not to scould I came, you Popish, ribly rascal,' replied Grimes, 'but to give you what you're long——'

"Ere the word had been out of his mouth, however, Kelly sprung over to him; and making a feint, as if he intended to lay the stick on his ribs, he swung it past without touching him, and bringing it round his own head like lightning, made it tell with a powerful back-stroke right on Grimes's temple, and in an instant his own face was sprinkled with the blood which sprung from the wound. Grimes staggered forward towards his antagonist; seeing which, Kelly sprung back, and was again meeting him with full force, when Grimes, turning a little, clutched Kelly's stick in his right hand, and being left-handed himself, ere the other could wrench the cudgel from him, he gave him a terrible blow upon the back part of the head, which laid Kelly in the dust.

"There was then a deafening shout from the Orange party; and Grimes stood until Kelly should be in the act of rising, ready then to give him another blow. The coolness and generalship of Kelly, however, were here very remarkable; for when he was just getting to his feet, 'Look at your party coming down upon me!' he exclaimed to Grimes, who turned round to order them back, and in the interim Kelly was upon his legs.

"I was surprised at the coolness of both men; for Grimes was by no means inflated with the boisterous triumph of his party, nor did Denis get into a blind rage on being knocked down. They approached again, their eyes kindled into savage fury, tamed down into the wariness of experienced combatants; for a short time they stood eyeing each other, as

if calculating upon the contingent advantages of attack or defence. This was a moment of great interest; for as their huge and powerful frames stood out in opposition, strung and dilated by passion and the energy of contest, no judgment, however experienced, could venture to anticipate the result of the battle, or name the person likely to be victorious. Indeed, it was surprising how the natural sagacity of these men threw their movements into scientific form and elegance. Kelly raised his cudgel, and placed it transversely in the air between himself and his opponent; Grimes instantly placed his against it—both weapons thus forming a St. Andrew's cross—whilst the men themselves stood foot to foot, calm and collected. Nothing could be finer than their proportions, nor superior to their respective attitudes: their broad chests were in a line; their thick, well-set necks laid a little back, as were their bodies—without, however, losing their balance; and their fierce but calm features grimly but placidly scowling at each other, like men who were prepared for the onset.

"At length Kelly made an attempt to repeat his former feint with variations; for whereas he had sent the first blow to Grimes's right temple, he took measures now to reach the left. His action was rapid, but equally quick was the eye of his antagonist, whose cudgel was up in ready guard to meet the blow. It met it; and with such surprising power was it sent and opposed that both cudgels, on meeting, bent across each other into curves. An involuntary huzza followed this from their respective parties—not so much on account of the skill displayed by the combatants, as in admiration of their cudgels, and of the judgment with which they must have been selected. In fact, it was the staves rather than the men that were praised; and certainly the former did their duty. In a moment their *shillelaghs* were across each other once more, and the men resumed their former attitudes. Their savage determination, their kindled eyes, the blood which disfigured the face of Grimes, and begrimed also the countenance of his antagonist into a deeper expression of ferocity, occasioned many a cowardly heart to shrink from the sight. There they stood, gory and stern, ready for the next onset. It was first made by Grimes, who tried to practise

on Kelly the feint which Kelly had before practised on him. Denis, after his usual manner, caught the blow in his open hand, and clutched the staff with an intention of holding it until he might visit Grimes—now apparently unguarded—with a levelling blow; but Grimes's effort to wrest the cudgel from his grasp drew all Kelly's strength to that quarter, and prevented him from availing himself of the other's defenceless attitude. A trial of muscular power ensued, and their enormous bodily strength was exhibited in the stiff tug for victory. Kelly's address prevailed; for while Grimes pulled against him with all his collected vigour, the former suddenly let go his hold, and the latter, having lost his balance, staggered back. Lightning could not be more quick than the action of Kelly, as, with tremendous force, his cudgel rung on the unprotected head of Grimes, who fell, or rather was shot to the ground, as if some superior power had dashed him against it; and there he lay for a short time, quivering under the blow he had received.

"A peal of triumph now arose from Kelly's party; but Kelly himself, placing his arms akimbo, stood calmly over his enemy, awaiting his return to the conflict. For nearly five minutes he stood in this attitude, during which time Grimes did not stir; at length Kelly stooped a little, and peering closely into his face, exclaimed—

"'Why, then, is it acting you are? Anyhow, I wouldn't put it past you, you cunning vagabone—'tis lying to take breath he is. Get up, man; I'd scorn to touch you till you're on your legs—not all as one, for, sure, it's yourself would show me no such forbearance. Up with you, man alive; I've none of your own thrachery in me. I'll not rise my cudgel till you're on your guard.'

"There was an expression of disdain mingled with a glow of honest, manly generosity on his countenance as he spoke, which made him at once the favourite with such spectators as were not connected with either of the parties. Grimes arose; and it was evident that Kelly's generosity deepened his resentment more than the blow which had sent him so rapidly to the ground. However, he was still cool, but his brows knit, his eye flashed with double fierceness, and his complexion settled into a dark-blue shade, which gave to

his whole visage an expression fearfully ferocious. Kelly hailed this as the first appearance of passion; his brow expanded as the other approached, and a dash of confidence, if not of triumph, softened in some degree the sternness of his features.

"With caution they encountered again, each collected for a spring, their eyes gleaming at each other like those of tigers. Grimes made a motion as if he would have struck Kelly with his fist; and as the latter threw up his guard against the blow, he received a stroke from Grimes's cudgel on the under part of the right arm. This had been directed at his elbow, with an intention of rendering the arm powerless; it fell short, however, yet was sufficient to relax the grasp which Kelly held of his weapon. Had Kelly been a novice, this stratagem alone would have soon vanquished him; his address, however, was fully equal to that of his antagonist. The staff dropped instantly from his grasp, but a stout thong of black polished leather, with a shining tassel at the end of it, had bound it securely to his massive wrist; the cudgel, therefore, only dangled from his arm, and did not, as the other expected, fall to the ground, or put Denis to the necessity of stooping for it—Grimes's object being to have struck him in that attitude.

"A flash of indignation now shot from Kelly's eye, and with the speed of lightning he sprung within Grimes's weapon, determined to wrest it from him. The grapple that ensued was gigantic. In a moment Grimes's staff was parallel with the horizon between them, clutched in the powerful grasp of both. They stood exactly opposite, and rather close to each other; their arms sometimes stretched out stiff and at full length, again contracted, until their faces, glowing and distorted by the energy of the contest, were drawn almost together. Sometimes the prevailing strength of one would raise the staff slowly, and with gradually developed power, up in a perpendicular position; again, the reaction of opposing strength would strain it back, and sway the weighty frame of the antagonist, crouched and set into desperate resistance, along with it; whilst the hard pebbles under their feet were crumbled into powder, and the very street itself furrowed into gravel by the shock of their

opposing strength. Indeed, so well matched a pair never met in contest; their strength, their wind, their activity, and their natural science appeared to be perfectly equal.

"At length, by a tremendous effort, Kelly got the staff twisted nearly out of Grimes's hand, and a short shout, half encouraging, half indignant, came from Grimes's party. This added shame to his other passions, and threw an impulse of almost superhuman strength into him: he recovered his advantage, but nothing more; they twisted—they heaved their great frames against each other—they struggled—their action became rapid—they swayed each other this way and that—their eyes like fire, their teeth locked, and their nostrils dilated. Sometimes they twined about each other like serpents, and twirled round with such rapidity that it was impossible to distinguish them; sometimes, when a pull of more than ordinary power took place, they seemed to cling together almost without motion, bending down until their heads nearly touched the ground, their cracking joints seeming to stretch by the effort, and the muscles of their limbs standing out from the flesh, strung in amazing tension.

"In this attitude were they, when Denis, with the eye of a hawk, spied a disadvantage in Grimes's position; he wheeled round, placed his broad shoulder against the shaggy breast of the other, and giving him what is called an 'inside crook,' strained him, despite of every effort, until he fairly got him on his shoulder, and off the point of resistance. There was a cry of alarm from the windows, particularly from the females, as Grimes's huge body was swung over Kelly's shoulder, until it came down in a crash upon the hard gravel of the street, while Denis stood in triumph, with his enemy's staff in his hand. A loud huzza followed this from all present, except the Orangemen, who stood bristling with fury and shame for the temporary defeat of their champion.

"Denis again had his enemy at his mercy, but he scorned to use his advantage ungenerously; he went over, and placing the staff in his hands—for the other had got to his legs—retrograded to his place, and desired Grimes to defend himself.

"After considerable manœuvring on both sides, Denis, who appeared to be the more active of the two, got an open on his antagonist, and by a powerful blow upon Grimes's ear sent him to the ground with amazing force. I never saw such a blow given by mortal: the end of the cudgel came exactly upon the ear, and as Grimes went down, the blood spurted out of his mouth and nostrils; he then kicked convulsively several times as he lay upon the ground, and that moment I really thought he would never have breathed more.

"The shout was again raised by the Ribbonmen, who threw up their hats, and bounded from the ground with the most vehement exultation. Both parties then waited to give Grimes time to rise and renew the battle; but he appeared perfectly contented to remain where he was, for there appeared no signs of life or motion in him.

"'Have you got your gruel, boy?' said Kelly, going over to where he lay. 'Well, you met Denis Kelly at last, didn't you? and there you lie; but, plase God, the most of your sort will soon lie in the same state. Come, boys,' said Kelly, addressing his own party; 'now for bloody Vengeance and his crew, that thransported the M'Guigans and the Caffries, and murdered Collier. Now, boys, have at the murderers, and let us have satisfaction for all!'

"A mutual rush instantly took place; but ere the Orangemen came down to where Grimes lay, Kelly had taken his staff and handed it to one of his own party. It is impossible to describe the scene that ensued. The noise of the blows, the shouting, the yelling, the groans, the scalped heads and gory visages gave both to the eye and the ear an impression that could not easily be forgotten. The battle was obstinately maintained on both sides for nearly an hour, and with a skill of manœuvring, attack, and retreat that was astonishing.

"Both parties arranged themselves against each other, forming something like two lines of battle, and these extended along the town nearly from one end to the other. It was curious to remark the difference in the persons and appearances of the combatants. In the Orange line the men were taller and of more powerful frames; but the Ribbonmen were more hardy, active, and courageous. Man to man,

notwithstanding their superior bodily strength, the Orangemen could never fight the others; the former depend too much upon their fire and side arms, but they are by no means so well trained to the use of the cudgel as their enemies. In the district where the scene of this fight is laid, the Catholics generally inhabit the mountainous part of the country, to which, when the civil feuds of worse times prevailed, they had been driven at the point of the bayonet; the Protestants and Presbyterians, on the other hand, who came in upon their possessions, occupy the richer and more fertile tracts of the land, living, of course, more wealthily, with less labour, and on better food. The characteristic features produced by these causes are such as might be expected—the Catholic being, like his soil, hardy, thin, and capable of bearing all weathers; and the Protestants, larger, softer, and more inactive.

"Their advance to the first onset was far different from a faction fight. There existed a silence here that powerfully evinced the inextinguishable animosity with which they encountered. For some time they fought in two compact bodies, that remained unbroken so long as the chances of victory were doubtful. Men went down, and were up, and went down in all directions with uncommon rapidity; and as the weighty phalanx of Orangemen stood out against the nimble line of their mountain adversaries, the intrepid spirit of the latter, and their surprising skill and activity, soon gave symptoms of a gradual superiority in the conflict. In the course of about half an hour the Orange party began to give way in the northern end of the town; and as their opponents pressed them warmly and with unsparing hand, the heavy mass formed by their numbers began to break, and this decomposition ran up their line, until in a short time they were thrown into utter confusion. They now fought in detached parties; but these subordinate conflicts, though shorter in duration than the shock of the general battle, were much more inhuman and destructive; for whenever any particular gang succeeded in putting their adversaries to flight, they usually ran to the assistance of their friends in the nearest fight — by which means they often fought three to one.

"There lived a short distance out of the town a man nicknamed Jemmy *Boccagh*, on account of his lameness—he was also sometimes called 'Hip-an'-go-constant'—who fell the first victim to party spirit. He had got arms on seeing his friends likely to be defeated, and had the hardihood to follow, with charged bayonet, a few Ribbonmen, whom he attempted to intercept as they fled from a large number of their enemies who had got them separated from their comrades. *Boccagh* ran across a field, in order to get before them on the road, and was in the act of climbing a ditch, when one of them, who carried a spade-shaft, struck him a blow on the head which put an end to his existence.

"This circumstance imparted, of course, fiercer hatred to both parties—triumph inspiring the one, a thirst for vengeance nerving the other. Kelly inflicted tremendous punishment in every direction; for scarcely a blow fell from him which did not bring a man to the ground. It absolutely resembled a military engagement, for the number of combatants amounted at least to two thousand men. In many places the street was covered with small pools and clots of blood which flowed from those who lay insensible; while others were borne away bleeding, groaning, or staggering, having been battered into a total unconsciousness of the scene about them.

"At length the Orangemen gave way, and their enemies, yelling with madness and revenge, began to beat them with unrestrained fury. The former, finding that they could not resist the impetuous tide which burst upon them, fled back past the church, and stopped not until they had reached an elevation, on which lay two or three heaps of stones that had been collected for the purpose of paving the streets. Here they made a stand, and commenced a vigorous discharge of them against their pursuers. This checked the latter; and the others, seeing them hesitate, and likely to retreat from the missiles, pelted them with such effect that the tables became turned, and the Ribbonmen made a speedy flight back into the town.

"In the meantime several Orangemen had gone into Sherlock's, where a considerable number of arms had been deposited, with an intention of resorting to them in case of

a defeat at the cudgels. These now came out, and met the Ribbonmen on their flight from those who were pelting them with the stones. A dreadful scene ensued. The Ribbonmen, who had the advantage in numbers, finding themselves intercepted before by those who had arms, and pursued behind by those who had recourse to the stones, fought with uncommon bravery and desperation. Kelly, who was furious, but still collected and decisive, shouted out in Irish, lest the opposite party might understand him, 'Let every two men seize upon one of those who have the arms.'

"This was attempted, and effected with partial success; and I have no doubt but the Orangemen would have been ultimately beaten and deprived of their weapons, were it not that many of them who had got their pistols out of Sherlock's discharged them among their enemies, and wounded several. The Catholics could not stand this; but wishing to retaliate as effectually as possible, lifted stones wherever they could find them, and kept up the fight at a distance as they retreated. On both sides, wherever a solitary foe was caught straggling from the rest, he was instantly punished.

"It was just about this time that I saw Kelly engaged with two men, whom he kept at bay with great ease—retrograding, however, as he fought, towards his own party. Grimes, who had some time before this recovered and joined the fight once more, was returning, after having pursued several of the Ribbonmen past the market-house, where he spied Kelly thus engaged. With a volunteer gun in his hand, and furious with the degradation of his former defeat, he ran over and struck him with the butt-end of it upon the temple, and Denis fell. When the stroke was given, an involuntary cry of 'Murder—foul, foul!' burst from those who looked on from the windows, and long John Steele, Grimes's father-in-law, in indignation raised his cudgel to knock him down for this treacherous and malignant blow; but a person out of Neal Cassidy's back-yard hurled a round stone, about six pounds in weight, at Grimes's head, that felled him to the earth, leaving him as insensible, and nearly in as dangerous a state, as Kelly, for his jaw was broken.

"By this time the Catholics had retreated out of the town, and Denis might probably have received more punishment had those who were returning from the pursuit recognised him; but James Wilson, seeing the dangerous situation in which he lay, came out, and, with the assistance of his servant-man, brought him into his own house. When the Orangemen had driven their adversaries off the field, they commenced the most hideous yellings through the streets—got music and played party tunes—offered any money for the face of a Papist; and any of that religion who were so unfortunate as to make their appearance were beaten in the most relentless manner. It was precisely the same thing on the part of the Ribbonmen: if a Protestant, but, above all, an Orangeman, came in their way, he was sure to be treated with barbarity—for the retaliation on either side was dreadfully unjust, the innocent suffering as well as the guilty. Leaving the window, I found Kelly in a bad state below stairs.

"'What's to be done?' said I to Wilson.

"'I know not,' replied he, 'except I put him between us on my jaunting-car and drive him home.'

"This appeared decidedly the best plan we could adopt; so, after putting to the horse, we placed him on the car, sitting one on each side of him, and in this manner left him at his own house."

"Did you run no risk," said I, "in going among Kelly's friends whilst they were under the influence of party feeling and exasperated passion?"

"No," said he; "we had rendered many of them acts of kindness, and had never exhibited any spirit but a friendly one towards them; and such individuals, but only such, might walk through a crowd of enraged Catholics or Protestants quite unmolested.

"The next morning Kelly's landlord and two magistrates were at his house; but he lay like a log, without sense or motion. Whilst they were there the surgeon arrived, and after examining his head, declared that the skull was fractured. During that and the following day the house was surrounded by crowds, anxious to know his state; and nothing might be heard amongst most of them but loud and undisguised

expressions of the most ample revenge. The wife was frantic, and, on seeing me, hid her face in her hands, exclaiming—

"'Ah, sir, I knew it would come to this; and you, too, tould him the same thing. My curse and God's curse on it for quarrelling! Will it never stop in the counthry till they rise some time and murdher one another out of the face!'

"As soon as the swelling in his head was reduced, the surgeon performed the operation of trepanning, and thereby saved his life; but his strength and intellect were gone, and he just lingered for four months, a feeble, drivelling simpleton, until, in consequence of a cold, which produced inflammation in the brain, he died, as hundreds have died, the victim of party spirit."

Such was the account which I heard of my old schoolfellow Denis Kelly; and, indeed, when I reflected upon the nature of the education he received, I could not but admit that the consequences were such as might naturally be expected to result from it.

The next morning a relation of Mrs. Kelly's came down to my brother, hoping that, as they wished to have as decent a funeral as possible, he would be so kind as to attend it.

"*Musha*, God knows, sir," said the man, "it's poor Denis —heavens be his bed—that had the regard and reverence for every one, young and ould, of your father's family; and it's himself that would be the proud man, if he was living, to see you, sir, riding after his coffin."

"Well," said my brother, "let Mrs. Kelly know that I shall certainly attend, and so will my brother, here, who has come to pay me a visit. Why, I believe, Tom, you forget him!"

"Your brother, sir! Is it Masther Toby, that used to cudgel the half of the counthry when he was at school? Gad's my life, Masther Toby (I was now about thirty-six), but it's your four quarters, sure enough! *Arrah*, thin, sir, who'd think it—you're grown so full and stout — but, faix, you'd always the bone in you! Ah, Masther Toby!" said he, "he's lying cowld this morning that would be the happy man to lay his eyes wanst more upon you. Many an' many's the winther's evening did he spind talking about the time when you and he were *bouchals* together, and of the pranks

you played at school, but especially of the time you both leathered the four Grogans, and tuck the apples from them —my poor fellow !—and now to be stretched a corpse, lavin' his poor widdy and childher behind him !"

I accordingly expressed my sorrow for Denis's death, which, indeed, I sincerely regretted, for he possessed materials for an excellent character, had not all that was amiable and good in him been permitted to run wild.

As soon as my trunk and travelling-bag had been brought from the inn where I had left them the preceding night, we got our horses, and as we wished to show particular respect to Denis's remains, rode up, with some of our friends, to the house. When we approached, there were large crowds of the country-people before the door of his well-thatched and respectable-looking dwelling, which had three chimneys, and a set of sash-windows, clean and well glazed. On our arrival I was soon recognised and surrounded by numbers of those to whom I had formerly been known, who received and welcomed me with a warmth of kindness and sincerity which it would be in vain to look for among the peasantry of any other nation.

Indeed, I have uniformly observed that when no religious or political feeling influences the heart and principles of an Irish peasant, he is singularly sincere and faithful in his attachments, and has always a bias to the generous and the disinterested. To my own knowledge, circumstances frequently occur in which the ebullition of party spirit is altogether temporary, subsiding after the cause that produced it has passed away, and leaving the kind peasant to the naturally affectionate and generous impulses of his character. But poor Paddy, unfortunately, is as combustible a material in politics or religion as in fighting—thinking it his duty to take the weak [1] side, without any other consideration than because it is the weak side.

[1] A gentleman once told me an anecdote of which he was an eye-witness. Some peasants belonging to opposite factions had met under peculiar circumstances ; there were, however, two on one side, and four on the other. In this case there was likely to be no fight ; but, in order to balance the number, one of the more numerous party joined the weak side—"Bekase, boys, it would be a burnin' shame, so it would, for four to lick two ; and, except I join them, by the powers, there's no chance of there being a bit of sport or a row, at all, at all !"

When we entered the house I was almost suffocated with the strong fumes of tobacco-smoke, snuff, and whisky; and as I had been an old schoolfellow of Denis's, my appearance was the signal for a general burst of grief among his relations, in which the more distant friends and neighbours of the deceased joined, to keep up the *keening*.

I have often, indeed always, felt that there is something extremely touching in the Irish cry; in fact, that it breathes the very spirit of wild and natural sorrow. The Irish peasantry, whenever a death takes place, are exceedingly happy in seizing upon any contingent circumstances that may occur, and making them subservient to the excitement of grief for the departed, or the exultation and praise of his character and virtues. My entrance was a proof of this—I had scarcely advanced to the middle of the floor, when my intimacy with the deceased, our boyish sports, and even our quarrels, were adverted to with a natural eloquence and pathos that, in spite of my firmness, occasioned me to feel the prevailing sorrow. They spoke, or chanted mournfully, in Irish; but the substance of what they said was as follows :—

"Oh, Denis, Denis, *avourneen!* you're lying low this morning of sorrow!—lying low, are you, and does not know who it is (alluding to me) that is standing over you, weeping for the days you spent together in your youth! It's yourself, *acushla agus asthore machree* (the pulse and beloved of my heart), that would stretch out the right hand warmly to welcome him to the place of his birth, where you had both been so often happy about the green hills and valleys with each other! He's here now, standing over you; and it's he, of all his family, kind and respectable as they are, that was your own favourite, Denis, *avourneen dheelish!* He alone was the companion that you loved!—with no other could you be happy! For him did you fight when he wanted a friend in your young quarrels! and if you had a dispute with him, were not you sorry for it? Are you not now stretched in death before him, and will he not forgive you?"

All this was uttered, of course, extemporaneously, and without the least preparation. They then passed on to an enumeration of his virtues as a father, a husband, son, and brother—specified his worth as he stood related to

society in general, and his kindness as a neighbour and a friend.

An occurrence now took place which may serve in some measure to throw light upon many of the atrocities and outrages which take place in Ireland. Before I mention it, however, I think it necessary to make a few observations relative to it. I am convinced that those who are intimately acquainted with the Irish peasantry will grant that there is not on the earth a class of people in whom the domestic affections of blood-relationship are so pure, strong, and sacred. The birth of a child will occasion a poor man to break in upon the money set apart for his landlord, in order to keep the christening among his friends and neighbours with due festivity. A marriage exhibits a spirit of joy, an exuberance of happiness and delight, to be found only in the Green Island; and the death of a member of a family is attended with a sincerity of grief scarcely to be expected from men so much the creatures of the more mirthful feelings. In fact, their sorrow is a solecism in humanity—at once deep and loud—mingled up, even in its greatest paroxysms, with a laughter-loving spirit. It is impossible that an Irishman sunk in the lowest depths of affliction could permit his grief to flow in all the sad solemnity of affliction even for a day, without some glimpse of his natural humour throwing a faint and rapid light over the gloom within him. No; there is an amalgamation of sentiments in his mind which, as I said before, would puzzle any philosopher to account for. Yet it would be wrong to say, though his grief has something of an unsettled and ludicrous character about it, that he is incapable of the most subtle and delicate shades of sentiment, or the deepest and most desolating intensity of sorrow. But he laughs off those heavy vapours which hang about the moral constitution of the people of other nations, giving them a morbid habit which leaves them neither strength nor firmness to resist calamity, which they feel less keenly than an Irishman, exactly as a healthy man will feel the pangs of death with more acuteness than one who is wasted away by debility and decay. Let any man witness an emigration, and he will satisfy himself that this is true. I am convinced that Goldsmith's inimitable description of one in his "Deserted

Village" was a picture drawn from actual observation. Let him observe the emigrant as he crosses the Atlantic, and he will find, although he joins the jest, and the laugh, and the song, that he will seek a silent corner or a silent hour to indulge the sorrow which he still feels for the friends, the companions, and the native fields that he has left behind him. This constitution of mind is beneficial; the Irishman seldom or never hangs himself, because he is capable of too much real feeling to permit himself to become the slave of that which is factitious. There is no void in his affections or sentiments which a morbid and depraved sensibility could occupy; but his feelings, of what character soever they may be, are strong, because they are fresh and healthy. For this reason I maintain that when the domestic affections come under the influence of either grief or joy the peasantry of no nation are capable of feeling so deeply. Even on the ordinary occasions of death, sorrow, though it alternates with mirth and cheerfulness in a manner peculiar to themselves, lingers long in the unseen recesses of domestic life; any hand, therefore, whether by law or violence, that plants a wound *here*, will suffer to the death.

When my brother and I entered the house the body had just been put into the coffin; and it is usual after this takes place, and before it is nailed down, for the immediate relatives of the family to embrace the deceased, and take their last look and farewell of his remains. In the present instance the children were brought over, one by one, to perform that trying and melancholy ceremony. The first was an infant on the breast, whose little innocent mouth was held down to that of its dead father; the babe smiled upon his still and solemn features, and would have played with his grave-clothes, but that the murmur of unfeigned sorrow which burst from all present occasioned it to be removed. The next was a fine little girl of three or four years, who inquired where they were going to bring her daddy, and asked if he would not soon come back to her.

"My daddy's sleepin' a long time," said the child, "but I'll waken him till he sings me 'Peggy Slevin.' I like my daddy best, bekase I sleep wid him; and he brings me good things from the fair—he bought me this ribbon,"

said she, pointing to a ribbon which he had purchased for her.

The rest of the children were sensible of their loss, and truly it was a distressing scene. His eldest son and daughter, the former about fourteen, the latter about two years older, lay on the coffin, kissing his lips, and were with difficulty torn away from it.

"Oh!" said the boy, "he is going from us, and night or day we will never see him or hear of him more! Oh! father —father—is that the last sight we are ever to see of your face? Why, father dear, did you die, and leave us for ever—for ever? Wasn't your heart good to us, and your words kind to us? Oh! your last smile is smiled—your last kiss given—and your last kind word spoken to your childher that you loved, and that loved you as we did. Father, core of my heart, are you gone for ever, and your voice departed? Oh! the murdherers—oh! the murdherers, the murdherers!" he exclaimed, "that killed my father; for only for them he would be still wid us—but, by the God that's over me, if I live, night or day I will not rest till I have blood for blood; nor do I care who hears it, nor if I was hanged the next minute."

As these words escaped him, a deep and awful murmur of suppressed vengeance burst from his relations. At length their sorrow became too strong to be repressed; and as it was the time to take their last embrace and look of him, they came up, and after fixing their eyes on his face in deep affliction, their lips began to quiver, and their countenances became convulsed. They then burst out simultaneously into a tide of violent grief, which, after having indulged in it for some time, they checked. But the resolution of revenge was stronger than their grief, for, standing over his dead body, they repeated, almost word for word, the vow of vengeance which the son had just sworn. It was really a scene dreadfully and terribly solemn; and I could not avoid reflecting upon the mystery of nature, which can, from the deep power of domestic affection, cause to spring a determination to crime of so black a dye. Would to God that our peasantry had a clearer sense of moral and religious duties, and were not left so much as they are to the headlong impulse of an ardent

temperament and an impetuous character; and would to God that the clergy who superintend their education and morals had a better knowledge of human nature!

During all this time the heart-broken widow sat beyond the coffin, looking upon what passed with a stupid sense of bereavement; and when they had all performed this last ceremony, it was found necessary to tell her that the time was come for the procession of the funeral, and that they only waited for her to take, as the rest did, her last look and embrace of her husband. When she heard this, it pierced her like an arrow: she became instantly collected, and her complexion assumed a dark sallow shade of despairing anguish, which it was an affliction even to look upon. She then stooped over the coffin, and kissed him several times, after which she ceased sobbing, and lay silently with her mouth to his.

The character of a faithful wife sorrowing for a beloved husband has that in it which compels both respect and sympathy. There was not at this moment a dry eye in the house. She still lay silent on the coffin; but as I observed that her bosom seemed not to heave as it did a little before, I was convinced that she had become insensible. I accordingly beckoned to Kelly's brother, to whom I mentioned what I had suspected; and on his going over to ascertain the truth, he found her as I had said. She was then brought to the air, and after some trouble recovered; but I recommended them to put her to bed, and not to subject her to any unnecessary anguish by a custom which was really too soul-piercing to endure. This, however, was, in her opinion, the violation of an old rite sacred to her heart and affections—she would not hear of it for an instant. Again she was helped out between her brother and brother-in-law; and after stooping down and doing as the others had done—

"Now," said she, "I will sit here, and keep him under my eye as long as I can—surely you won't blame me for it; you all know the kind husband he was to me, and the good right I have to be sorry for him! Oh!" she added, "is it thrue at all?—is he, my own Denis, the young husband of my airly love, in good arnest, dead, and going to leave me here—me, Denis, that you loved so tindherly, and our

childher that your brow was never clouded against? Can I believe myself, or is it a dhrame? Denis, *avick machree! avick machree!* your hand was dreaded, and a good right it had, for it was the manly hand, that was ever and always raised in defence of them that wanted a friend; abroad, in the faction fight, against the oppressor, your name was ever feared, *acushla!*—but at home—AT HOME—where was your fellow? Denis, *achora,* do you know the lips that's spaking to you?—your young bride—your heart's light. Oh! I remimber the day you war married to me like yesterday. Oh! *avourneen,* then and since wasn't the heart of your own Honor bound up in you—yet not a word even to me. Well, *agra machree,* 'tisn't your fault; it's the first time you ever refused to spake to your own Honor. But you're dead, *avourneen,* or it wouldn't be so—you're dead before my eyes, husband of my heart, and all my hopes and happiness goes into the coffin and the grave along wid you for ever!"

All this time she was rocking herself from side to side, her complexion pale and ghastly as could be conceived. When the coffin was about to be closed, she retired until it was nailed down; after which she returned with her bonnet and cloak on her, ready to accompany it to the grave. I was astonished, for I thought she could not have walked two steps without assistance; but it was the custom, and to neglect it, I found, would have thrown the imputation of insincerity upon her grief. While they were preparing to bring the coffin out, I could hear the chat and conversation of those who were standing in crowds before the door, and occasionally a loud vacant laugh, and sometimes a volley of them, responsive to the jokes of some rustic wit, probably the same person who acted as master of the revels at the wake.

Before the coffin was finally closed, Ned Corrigan, whom I had put to flight the preceding night, came up, and repeated the *De profundis* in very strange Latin over the corpse. When this was finished, he got a jug of holy water, and after dipping his thumb in it, first made the sign of the cross upon his own forehead, and afterwards sprinkled it upon all present, giving my brother and myself an extra compliment, supposing, probably, that we stood most in need

of it. When this was over, he sprinkled the corpse and the coffin in particular most profusely. He then placed two pebbles from Lough Derg, and a bit of holy candle, upon the breast of the corpse, and having said a *Pater* and *Ave*, in which he was joined by the people, he closed the lid and nailed it down.

"Ned," said his brother, "are his feet and toes loose?"

"*Musha*, but that's more than myself knows," replied Ned. "Are they, Katty?" said he, inquiring from the sister of the deceased.

"*Arrah*, to be sure, *avourneen*," answered Katty. "Div you think we would lave him to be tied that a-way when he'd be risin' out of his last bed? Wouldn't it be too bad to have his toes tied thin, *avourneen?*"

The coffin was then brought out and placed upon four chairs before the door to be keened; and in the meantime the friends and well-wishers of the deceased were brought into the room to get each a glass of whisky as a token of respect. I observed also that such as had not seen any of Kelly's relations until then, came up, and shaking hands with them, said, "I'm sorry for your loss!" This expression of condolence was uniform, and the usual reply was, "Thank you, Mat, or Jim!" with a pluck of the skirts, accompanied by a significant nod to follow. They then got a due share of whisky; and it was curious, after they came out, their faces a little flushed, and their eyes watery with the strong, ardent spirits, to hear with what heartiness and alacrity they entered into Denis's praises.

When he had been keened in the street, there being no hearse, the coffin was placed upon two handspikes which were fixed across, but parallel to each other, under it. These were borne by four men, one at the end of each, with the point of it touching his body a little below his stomach—in other parts of Ireland the coffin is borne on the shoulders, but this is more convenient and less distressing.

When we got out upon the road the funeral was of great extent, for Kelly had been highly respected. On arriving at the *merin* which bounded the land he had owned, the coffin was laid down, and a loud and wailing *keena* took place over it. It was again raised, and the funeral pro-

ceeded in a direction which I was surprised to see it take, and it was not until an acquaintance of my brother's had explained the matter that I understood the cause of it. In Ireland when a murder is perpetrated, it is usual, as the funeral proceeds to the graveyard, to bring the corpse to the house of him who committed the crime, and lay it down at his door, while the relations of the deceased kneel down, and with an appalling solemnity utter the deepest imprecations, and invoke the justice of Heaven on the head of the murderer. This, however, is usually omitted if the residence of the criminal be completely out of the line of the funeral; but if it be possible by any circuit to approach it, this dark ceremony is never omitted. In cases where the crime is doubtful or unjustly imputed, those who are thus visited come out, and laying their right hand upon the coffin, protest their innocence of the blood of the deceased, calling God to witness the truth of their asseverations; but in cases where the crime is clearly proved against the murderer, the door is either closed, the ceremony repelled by violence, or the house abandoned by the inmates until the funeral passes.

The death of Kelly, however, could not be actually, or at least directly, considered a murder, for it was probable that Grimes did not inflict the stroke with an intention of taking away his life, and, besides, Kelly survived it four months. Grimes's house was not more than fifteen perches from the road; and when the corpse was opposite the little bridle-way that led up to it, they laid it down for a moment, and the relations of Kelly surrounded it, offering up a short prayer with uncovered heads. It was then borne towards the house, whilst the keening commenced in a loud and wailing cry, accompanied with clapping of hands and every other symptom of external sorrow. But independent of their compliance with this ceremony as an old usage, there is little doubt that the appearance of anything connected with the man who certainly occasioned Kelly's death awoke a keener and more intense sorrow for his loss. The wailing was thus continued until the coffin was laid opposite Grimes's door; nor did it cease then, but, on the contrary, was renewed with louder and more bitter lamentations.

As the multitude stood compassionating the affliction of

the widow and orphans, it was the most impressive and solemn spectacle that could be witnessed. The very house seemed to have a condemned look; and as a single wintry breeze waved a tuft of long grass that grew on a seat of turf at the side of the door, it brought the vanity of human enmity before my mind with melancholy force. When the keening ceased, Kelly's wife, with her children, knelt, their faces towards the house of their enemy, and invoked, in the strong language of excited passion, the justice of Heaven upon the head of the man who had left her a widow, and her children fatherless. I was anxious to know if Grimes would appear to disclaim the intention of murder; but I understood that he was at market, for it happened to be market-day.

"Come out!" said the widow—"come out, and look at the sight that's here before you! Come and view your work! Lay but your hand upon the coffin, and the blood of him that you murdhered will spout, before God and these Christhen people, in your guilty face! But, oh! may the Almighty God bring this home to you! May you never lave this life, John Grimes, till worse nor has overtaken me and mine falls upon you and yours! May our curse light upon you this day—the curse, I say, of the widow and the orphans—and that your bloody hand has made us—may it blast you! May you and all belonging to you wither off the 'arth! Night and day, sleeping and waking, like snow off the ditch may you melt, until your name and your place will be disremimbered, except to be cursed by them that will hear of you and your hand of murdher! Amin, we pray God this day!—and the widow and orphans' prayer will not fall to the ground while your guilty head is above! Childher, did you all say it?"

At this moment a deep, terrific murmur, or rather ejaculation, corroborative of assent to this dreadful imprecation, pervaded the crowd in a fearful manner; their countenances darkened, their eyes gleamed, and their scowling visages stiffened into an expression of determined vengeance.

When these awful words were uttered, Grimes's wife and daughters approached the window in tears, sobbing at the same time loudly and bitterly.

"You're wrong," said the wife—"you're wrong, Widow

Kelly, in saying that my husband murdhered him!—he did not murdher him; for when you and yours were far from him, I heard John Grimes declare, before the God who's to judge him, that he had no thought or intention of taking his life—he struck him in anger, and the blow did him an injury that was not intended. Don't curse him, Honor Kelly," said she —"don't curse him so fearfully; but, above all, don't curse me and my innocent childher, for *we* never harmed you nor wished you ill! *But it was this party work did it!* Oh, my God!" she exclaimed, wringing her hands, in utter bitterness of spirit, "when will it be ended between friends and neighbours, that ought to live in love and kindness together, instead of fighting in this bloodthirsty manner!"

She then wept more violently, as did her daughters.

"May God give me mercy in the last day, Mrs. Kelly, as I pity from my heart and soul you and your orphans," she continued; "but don't curse us, for the love of God—for you know we should forgive our enemies, as we ourselves, that are the enemies of God, hope to be forgiven."

"May God forgive me, then, if I have wronged you or your husband," said the widow, softened by their distress; "but you know that, whether he intended his life or not, the stroke he gave him has left my childher without a father, and myself dissolate. Oh, heavens above me!" she exclaimed, in a scream of distraction and despair, "is it possible —is it thrue –that my manly husband, the best father that ever breathed the breath of life, my own Denis, is lying dead—murdhered before my eyes! Put your hands on my head, some of you—put your hands on my head, or it will go to pieces. Where are you, Denis—where are you, the strong of hand and the tender of heart? Come to me, darling; I want you in my distress. I want comfort, Denis; and I'll take it from none but yourself, for kind was your word to me in all my afflictions!"

All present were affected; and, indeed, it was difficult to say whether Kelly's wife or Grimes's was more to be pitied at the moment. The affliction of the latter and of her daughters was really pitiable: their sobs were loud, and the tears streamed down their cheeks like rain. When the widow's exclamations had ceased, or rather were lost in the

loud cry of sorrow which was uttered by the keeners and friends of the deceased, they, too, standing somewhat apart from the rest, joined in it bitterly; and the solitary wail of Mrs. Grimes, differing in character from that of those who had been trained to modulate the most profound grief into strains of a melancholy nature, was particularly wild and impressive. At all events, her Christian demeanour, joined to the sincerity of her grief, appeased the enmity of many; so true is it that a soft answer turneth away wrath. I could perceive, however, that the resentment of Kelly's male relations did not at all appear to be in any degree moderated.

The funeral again proceeded, and I remarked that whenever a strange passenger happened to meet it he always turned back and accompanied it for a short distance, after which he resumed his journey, it being considered unlucky to omit this usage on meeting a funeral. Denis's residence was not more than two miles from the churchyard, which was situated in the town where he had received the fatal blow. As soon as we had got on about the half of this way, the priest of the parish met us, and the funeral after proceeding a few perches more, turned into a green field, in the corner of which stood a table with the apparatus for saying mass spread upon it.

The coffin was then laid down once more, immediately before this temporary altar; and the priest, after having robed himself, the wrong side of the vestments out, as is usual in the case of death, began to celebrate mass for the dead, the congregation all kneeling. When this was finished, the friends of the deceased approached the altar, and after some private conversation, the priest turned round and inquired aloud—

"Who will give offerings?"

The people were acquainted with the manner in which this matter is conducted, and accordingly knew what to do. When the priest put the question, Denis's brother, who was a wealthy man, came forward, and laid down two guineas on the altar; the priest took this up, and putting it on a plate, set out among the multitude, accompanied by two or three of those who were best acquainted with the inhabitants of the parish. He thus continued putting the question distinctly

after each man had paid; and according as the money was laid down, those who accompanied the priest pronounced the name of the person who gave it, so that all present might hear it. This is also done to enable the friends of the deceased to know not only those who show them this mark of respect, but those who neglect it, in order that they may treat them in the same manner on similar occasions. The amount of money so received is very great; for there is a kind of emulation among the people as to who will act with most decency and spirit, that is exceedingly beneficial to the priest. In such instances the difference of religion is judiciously overlooked; for although the prayers of Protestants are declined on those occasions, yet it seems the same objection does not hold good against their money, and accordingly they pay as well as the rest. When the priest came round to where I stood, he shook hands with my brother, with whom he appeared to be on very friendly and familiar terms; he and I were then introduced to each other.

"Come," said he, with a very droll expression of countenance, shaking the plate at the same time up near my brother's nose—"come, Mr. D'Arcy, down with your offerings, if you wish to have a friend with St. Peter when you go as far as the gates; down with your money, sir, and you shall be remembered, depend upon it."

"Ah!" said my brother, pulling out a guinea, "I would with the greatest pleasure; but I fear this is not orthodox. I'm afraid it has the heretical mark upon it."

"In that case," replied his reverence, laughing heartily, "your only plan is to return it to the bosom of the Church by laying it on the plate here—it will then be within the pale, you know."

This reply produced a good deal of good-humour among that part of the crowd which immediately surrounded them—not excepting his nearest relations, who laughed heartily.

"Well," said my brother, as he laid it on the plate, "how many prayers will you offer up in my favour for this?"

"Leave that to myself," said his reverence, looking at the money—"it will be before you when you go to St. Peter."

He then held the plate out to me in a droll manner; and I

added another guinea to my brother's gift, for which I had the satisfaction of having my name called out so loud that it might be heard a quarter of a mile off.

"God bless you, sir," said the priest, "and I thank you."

"John," said I, when he left us, "I think that is a pleasant and rather a sensible man?"

"He's as jovial a soul," replied my brother, "as ever gave birth to a jest, and he sings a right good song. Many a convivial hour have he and I spent together; but, as to being a Catholic in their sense—Lord help you! At all events, he is no bigot; but, on the contrary, a liberal, and, putting religion out of the question, a kind and benevolent man."

When the offerings were all collected he returned to the altar, repeated a few additional prayers in prime style, as rapid as lightning; and after hastily shaking the holy water on the crowd, the funeral moved on. It was now two o'clock, the day clear and frosty, and the sun unusually bright for the season. During mass, many were added to those who formed the funeral train at the outset; so that when we got out upon the road the procession appeared very large. After this, few or none joined it; for it is esteemed by no means "dacent" to do so after mass, because, in that case, the matter is ascribed to an evasion of the offerings; but those whose delay has not really been occasioned by this motive make it a point to pay them at the graveyard or after the interment, and sometimes even on the following day—so jealous are the peasantry of having any degrading suspicion attached to their generosity.

The order of the funeral now was as follows: foremost the women; next to them the corpse, surrounded by the relations; the eldest son, in deep affliction, "led the coffin," as chief mourner, holding in his hand the corner of a sheet or piece of linen, fastened to the mort-cloth; after the coffin came those who were on foot, and in the rear were the equestrians. When we were a quarter of a mile from the churchyard the funeral was met by a dozen of singing boys, belonging to a chapel choir which the priest, who was fond of music, had some time before formed. They fell in, two by two, immediately behind the corpse, and commenced singing the "Requiem," or Latin hymn for the dead.

The scene through which we passed at this time, though not clothed with the verdure and luxuriant beauty of summer, was nevertheless marked by that solemn and decaying splendour which characterises a fine country, lit up by the melancholy light of a winter setting sun. It was therefore much more in character with the occasion. Indeed, I felt it altogether beautiful; and as the "dying day-hymn stole aloft," the dim sunbeams fell, through a vista of naked, motionless trees, upon the coffin, which was borne with a slower and more funereal pace than before, in a manner that threw a solemn and visionary light upon the whole procession. This, however, was raised to something dreadfully impressive when the long train, thus proceeding with a motion so mournful, was seen each covered with a profusion of crimson ribbons, to indicate that the corpse they bore owed his death to a deed of murder. The circumstance of the sun glancing his rays upon the coffin was not unobserved by the peasantry, who considered it as a good omen to the spirit of the departed.

As we went up the street which had been the scene of the quarrel that proved so fatal to Kelly, the coffin was again laid down on the spot where he received his death-blow; and, as was usual, the wild and melancholy *keena* was raised. My brother saw many of Grimes's friends among the spectators, but he himself was not visible. Whether Kelly's party saw them or not, we could not say; if they did, they seemed not to notice them, for no expression of revenge or indignation escaped them.

At length we entered the last receptacle of the dead. The coffin was now placed upon the shoulders of the son and brothers of the deceased, and borne round the churchyard; whilst the priest, with his stole upon him, preceded it, reading prayers for the eternal repose of the soul. Being then laid beside the grave, a *De profundis* was repeated by the priest and the mass-server; after which a portion of fresh clay, carried from the fields, was brought to his reverence, who read a prayer over it and consecrated it. This is a ceremony which is never omitted at the interment of a Roman Catholic. When it was over, the coffin was lowered into the grave, and the blessed clay shaken over it. The priest now took the

shovel in his own hands, and threw in the three first shovelfuls —one in the name of the Father, one in the name of the Son, and one in the name of the Holy Ghost. The sexton then took it, and in a short time Denis Kelly was fixed for ever in his narrow bed.

While these ceremonies were going forward, the churchyard presented a characteristic picture. Beside the usual groups who straggle through the place to amuse themselves by reading the inscriptions on the tombs, you might see many individuals kneeling on particular graves, where some relation lay, for the benefit of whose soul they offered up their prayers with an attachment and devotion which one cannot but admire. Sometimes all the surviving members of the family would assemble, and repeat a "Rosary" for the same purpose. Again, you might see an unhappy woman beside a newly-made grave, giving way to lamentation and sorrow for the loss of a husband or of some beloved child. Here you might observe the "last bed" ornamented with hoops, decked in white paper, emblematic of the virgin innocence of the individual who slept below; there a little board-cross, informing you that "this monument was erected by a disconsolate husband to the memory of his beloved wife." But that which excited greatest curiosity was a sycamore tree which grew in the middle of the burying-ground.

It is necessary to inform the reader that in Ireland many of the churchyards are exclusively appropriated to the interment of Roman Catholics, and consequently no Protestant corpse would be permitted to pollute or desecrate them. This was one of them; but it appears that, by some means or other, the body of a Protestant had been interred in it—and hear the consequence! The next morning Heaven marked its disapprobation of this awful visitation by a miracle; for ere the sun rose from the east a full-grown sycamore had shot up out of the heretical grave, and stands there to this day, a monument at once of the profanation and its consequence. Crowds were looking at this tree, feeling a kind of awe, mingled with wonder, at the deed which drew down such a visible and lasting mark of God's displeasure. On the tombstones near Kelly's grave, men and women were seated, smoking tobacco to their very heart's content; for with that

profusion which characterises the Irish in everything, they had brought out large quantities of tobacco, whisky, and bunches of pipes. On such occasions it is the custom for those who attend the wake or the funeral to bring a full pipe home with them; and it is expected that as often as it is used they will remember to say, "God be merciful to the soul of him that this pipe was over."

The crowd, however, now began to disperse; and the immediate friends of the deceased sent the priest, accompanied by Kelly's brother, to request that we would come in, as the last mark of respect to poor Denis's memory, and take a glass of wine and a cake.

"Come, Toby," said my brother, "we may as well go in, as it will gratify them; we need not make much delay, and we will still be at home in sufficient time for dinner."

"Certainly you will," said the priest, "for you shall both come and dine with me to-day."

"With all my heart," said my brother—"I have no objection, for I know you give it good."

When we went in, the punch was already reeking from immense white jugs, that couldn't hold less than a gallon each.

"Now," said his reverence, very properly, "you have had a dacent and creditable funeral, and have managed everything with great propriety; let me request, therefore, that you will not get drunk, nor permit yourselves to enter into any disputes or quarrels, but be moderate in what you take, and go home peaceably."

"Why, thin, your reverence," replied the widow, "he's now in his grave, and, thank God, it's he that had the dacent funeral all out—ten good gallons did we put on you, *asthore*, and it's yourself that liked the dacent thing, anyhow; but sure, sir, it would shame him where he's lyin' if we disregarded him so far as to go home widout bringing in our friends that didn't desart us in our throuble, and thratin' them for their kindness."

While Kelly's brother was filling out all their glasses, the priest, my brother, and I were taking a little refreshment. When the glasses were filled, the deceased's brother raised his in his hand, and said—

"Well, gintlemen," addressing us, "I hope you'll pardon me for not dhrinking your healths first; but people, you know, can't break through an ould custom, at any rate—so I give poor Denis's health, that's in his warm grave, and God be marciful to his sowl."[1]

The priest now winked at me to give them their own way; so we filled our glasses, and joined with the rest in drinking "Poor Denis's health, that's now in his warm grave, and God be merciful to his soul."

When this was finished, they then drank ours, and thanked us for our kindness in attending the funeral. It was now past five o'clock, and we left them just setting in to a hard bout of drinking, and rode down to his reverence's residence.

"I saw you smile," said he, on our way, "at the blundering toast of Mat Kelly; but it would be labour in vain to attempt setting them right. What do they know about the distinctions of more refined life? Besides, I maintain that what they said was as well calculated to express their affection as if they had drunk honest Denis's memory. It is, at least, unsophisticated. But did you hear," said he, "of the apparition that was seen last night on the mountain road above Denis's?"

"I did not hear of it," I replied, equivocating a little.

"Why," said he, "it is currently reported that the spirit of a murdered pedlar, which haunts the hollow of the road at Drumfurrar, chased away the two servant-men as they were bringing home the coffin, and that finding it a good bit, he then got into it, and walked half a mile along the road with the wooden surtout upon him; and finally, that, to wind up the frolic, he left it on one end half-way between the bridge and Denis's house, after putting a crowd of the countrymen to flight. I suspect some droll knave has played them a trick. I assure you that a deputation of them, who declared that they saw the coffin move along of itself, waited upon me this morning to know whether they ought to have him put into the coffin or gotten another."

"Well," said my brother, in reply to him, "after dinner we will probably throw some light upon that circumstance; for I believe my brother here knows something about it."

[1] A fact.

"So, sir," said the priest, "I perceive you have been amusing yourself at their expense."

I seldom spent a pleasanter evening than I did with Father Molloy (so he was called), who was, as my brother said, a shrewd, sensible man, possessed of convivial powers of the first order. He sang us several good songs; and to do him justice, he had an excellent voice. He regretted very much the state of party and religious feeling, which he did everything in his power to suppress.

"But," said he, "I have little co-operation in my efforts to communicate knowledge to my flock and implant better feelings among them. You must know," he added, "that I am no great favourite among them. On being appointed to this parish by my bishop, I found that the young man who was curate to my predecessor had formed a party against me, thinking, by that means, eventually to get the parish himself. Accordingly, on coming here, I found the chapel doors closed on me; so that a single individual among them would not recognise me as their proper pastor. By firmness and spirit, however, I at length succeeded, after a long struggle against the influence of the curate, in gaining admission to the altar; and by a proper representation of his conduct to the bishop I soon made my gentleman knock under. Although beginning to gain ground in the good opinion of the people, I am by no means yet a favourite. The curate and I scarcely speak; and a great number of my parishioners brand me with the epithet of the "Orange priest," and this principally because I occasionally associate with Protestants—a habit, gentlemen, which they will find some difficulty in making me give up as long as I can have the pleasure," said he, bowing, "of seeing such guests at my table as those with whose company I am now honoured."

It was now near nine o'clock, and my brother was beginning to relate an anecdote concerning the clergyman who had preceded Father Molloy in the parish, when a messenger from Mr. Wilson, already alluded to, came up in breathless haste, requesting the priest for God's sake to go down into town instantly, as the Kellys and the Grimeses were engaged in a fresh quarrel.

"My God!" he exclaimed—"when will this work have an

end? But, to tell you the truth, gentlemen, I apprehended it; and I fear something still more fatal to the parties will yet be the consequence. Mr. D'Arcy, you must try what you can do with the Grimeses, and I will manage the Kellys."

We then proceeded to the town, which was but a very short distance from the priest's house; and on arriving, found a large crowd before the door of the house in which the Kellys had been drinking, engaged in hard conflict. The priest was on foot, and had brought his whip with him, it being an argument in the hands of a Roman Catholic pastor which tells so home that it is not to be gainsaid. Mr. Molloy and my brother now dashed in amongst them, and by remonstrance, abuse, blows, and entreaty, they with difficulty succeeded in terminating the fight. They were also assisted by Mr. Wilson and other persons, who dared not, until their appearance, run the risk of interfering between them. Wilson's servant who had come for the priest, was still standing beside me looking on; and while my brother and Mr. Molloy were separating the parties, I asked him how the fray commenced.

"Why, sir," said he, "it bein' market-day, the Grimeses chanced to be in town, and this got to the ears of the Kellys, who were drinking in Cassidy's here till they got tipsy; some then broke out, and began to go up and down the street, shouting for the face of a murdhering Grimes. The Grimeses, sir, happened at the time to be drinking with a parcel of their friends in Joe Sherlock's, and hearing the Kellys calling out for them, why, as the dhrop, sir, was in on both sides, they were soon at it. Grimes has given one of the Kellys a great bating; but Tom M'Guigan, Kelly's cousin, a little before we came, I'm tould, has knocked the seven senses out of him with the pelt of a brickbat in the stomach."

Soon after this, however, the quarrel was got under; and in order to prevent any more bloodshed that night, my brother and I got the Kellys together, and brought them as far as our residence on their way home. As we went along they uttered awful vows and determinations of the deepest revenge, swearing repeatedly that they would shoot Grimes from behind a ditch if they could not in any other manner have his blood. They seemed highly intoxicated, and several

of them were cut and abused in a dreadful manner; even the women were in such a state of excitement and alarm that grief for the deceased was in many instances forgotten. Several of both sexes were singing; some laughing with triumph at the punishment they had inflicted on the enemy; others of them, softened by what they had drunk, were weeping in tones of sorrow that might be heard a couple of miles off. Among the latter were many of the men, some of whom, as they staggered along, with their frieze big-coats hanging off one shoulder, clapped their hands and roared like bulls, as if they intended, by the loudness of their grief then, to compensate for their silence when sober. It was also quite ludicrous to see the men kissing each other, sometimes in this maudlin sorrow, and at others when exalted into the very madness of mirth. Such as had been cut in the scuffle, on finding the blood trickle down their faces, would wipe it off, then look at it, and break out into a parenthetical volley of curses against the Grimeses; after which they would resume their grief, hug each other in mutual sorrow, and clap their hands as before. In short, such a group could be seen nowhere but in Ireland.

When my brother and I had separated from them I asked him what had become of Vengeance, and if he were still in the country.

"No," said he; "with all his courage and watchfulness, he found that his life was not safe; he accordingly sold off his property, and collecting all his ready cash, emigrated to America, where, I hear, he is doing well."

"God knows," I replied, "I shouldn't be surprised if one half of the population were to follow his example, for the state of society here among the lower orders is truly deplorable."

"Ay, but you are to consider," said he, "that you have been looking at the worst of it. If you pass an unfavourable opinion upon our countrymen when in the public-house or the quarrel, you ought to remember what they are under their own roofs and in all the relations of public life."

THE HEDGE SCHOOL

THERE never was a more unfounded calumny than that which would impute to the Irish peasantry an indifference to education. I may, on the contrary, fearlessly assert that the lower orders of no country ever manifested such a positive inclination for literary acquirements, and that, too, under circumstances strongly calculated to produce carelessness and apathy on this particular subject. Nay, I do maintain that he who is intimately acquainted with the character of our countrymen must acknowledge that their zeal for book learning not only is strong and ardent when opportunities of scholastic education occur, but that it increases in proportion as these opportunities are rare and unattainable. The very name and nature of hedge schools are proof of this; for what stronger point could be made out in illustration of my position than the fact that, despite of obstacles whose very idea would crush ordinary enterprise—when not even a shed could be obtained in which to assemble the children of an Irish village—the worthy pedagogue selected the first green spot on the sunny side of a quickset-hedge which he conceived adapted for his purpose, and there, under the scorching rays of a summer sun, and in defiance of spies and statutes, carried on the work of instruction. From this circumstance the name of hedge school originated; and, however it may be associated with the ludicrous, I maintain that it is highly creditable to the character of the people, and an encouragement to those who wish to see them receive pure and correct educational knowledge. A hedge school, however, in its original sense, was but a temporary establishment, being only adopted until such a school-house could be erected as was in those days deemed sufficient to hold such a number of children as were expected, at all hazards, to attend it.

The opinion, I know, which has been long entertained

of hedge schoolmasters was, and still is, unfavourable; but the character of these worthy and eccentric persons has been misunderstood; for the stigma attached to their want of knowledge should have rather been applied to their want of morals, because on this latter point only were they indefensible. The fact is that hedge schoolmasters were a class of men from whom morality was not expected by the peasantry; for, strange to say, one of their strongest recommendations to the good opinion of the people, as far as their literary talents and qualifications were concerned, was an inordinate love of whisky, and if to this could be added a slight touch of derangement, the character was complete.

On once asking an Irish peasant why he sent his children to a schoolmaster who was notoriously addicted to spirituous liquors, rather than to a man of sober habits who taught in the same neighbourhood—

"Why do I sind them to Mat Meegan, is it?" he replied; "and do you think, sir," said he, "that I'd sind them to that dry-headed dunce, Mr. Frazher, with his black coat upon him, and his Caroline hat, and him wouldn't taste a glass of poteen wanst in seven years? Mat, sir, likes it, and teaches the boys ten times betther whin he's dhrunk nor when he's sober; and you'll never find a good tacher, sir, but's fond of it. As for Mat, when he's half gone, I'd turn him agin the country for deepness in larning; for it's then he rhymes it out of him, that it would do one good to hear him."

"So," said I, "you think that a love of drinking *poteen* is a sign of talent in a schoolmaster?"

"Ay, or in any man else, sir," he replied. "Look at tradesmen, and 'tis always the cleverest that you'll find fond of the dhrink. If you had hard Mat and Frazher the other evening at it—what a hare Mat made of him; but he was just in proper tune for it, being at the time purty well, I thank you, and did not lave him a leg to stand upon. He took him in Euclid's Ailments and Logicals, and proved in Frazher's teeth that the candlestick before them was the church-steeple, and Frazher himself the parson; and so sign was on it, the other couldn't disprove it, but had to give in."

"Mat, then," I observed, "is the most learned man on this walk?"

"Why, thin, I doubt that same, sir," replied he, "for all he's so great in the books; for, you see, while they were ding dust at it, who comes in but mad Delany, and he attacked Mat, and in less than no time rubbed the consate out of him, as clane as *he* did out of Frazher."

"Who is Delany?" I inquired.

"He was the makings of a priest, sir, and was in Maynooth a couple of years, but he took in the knowledge so fast that, bedad, he got cracked wid larnin'—for a dunce, you see, never cracks wid it, in regard of the thickness of the skull. No doubt but he's too many for Mat, and can go far beyand him in the books; but then, like that, he's still brightest whin he has a sup in his head."

These are prejudices which the Irish peasantry have long entertained concerning the character of hedge schoolmasters; but granting them to be unfounded, as they generally are, yet it is an indisputable fact that hedge schoolmasters were as superior in literary knowledge and acquirements to the class of men who are now engaged in the general education of the people as they were beneath them in moral and religious character. The former part of this assertion will, I am aware, appear rather startling to many. But it is true; and one great cause why the character of society teachers is undervalued in many instances by the people proceeds from a conviction on their parts that they are, and must be, incapable, from the slender portion of learning they have received, of giving their children a sound and practical education.

But that we may put this subject in a clearer light, we will give a sketch of the course of instruction which was deemed necessary for a hedge schoolmaster, and let it be contrasted with that which falls to the lot of those engaged in the conducting of schools patronised by the Education Societies of the present day

When a poor man, about twenty or thirty years ago, understood from the schoolmaster who educated his sons that any of them was particularly "'cute at his larnin'," the ambition of the parent usually directed itself to one of three objects—he would either make him a priest, a clerk, or a schoolmaster. The determination once fixed, the boy was set apart from

every kind of labour, that he might be at liberty to bestow his undivided time and talents on the objects set before him. His parents strained every nerve to furnish him with the necessary books, and always took care that his appearance and dress should be more decent than those of any other member of the family. If the Church were in prospect, he was distinguished, after he had been two or three years at his Latin, by the appellation of "the young priest," an epithet to him of the greatest pride and honour; but if destined only to wield the ferula, his importance in the family and the narrow circle of his friends was by no means so great. If, however, the goal of his future ambition as a schoolmaster was humbler, that of his literary career was considerably extended. He usually remained at the next school in the vicinity until he supposed that he had completely drained the master of all his knowledge. This circumstance was generally discovered in the following manner:—As soon as he judged himself a match for his teacher, and possessed sufficient confidence in his own powers, he penned him a formal challenge to meet him in literary contest, either in his own school, before competent witnesses, or at the chapel green, on the Sabbath day, before the arrival of the priest, or probably after it, for the priest himself was generally the moderator and judge upon these occasions. This challenge was generally couched in rhyme, and either sent by the hands of a common friend, or posted upon the chapel door.

These contests, as the reader perceives, were always public, and were witnessed by the peasantry with intense interest. If the master sustained a defeat, it was not so much attributed to his want of learning as to the overwhelming talent of his opponent; nor was the success of the pupil generally followed by the expulsion of the master, for this was but the first of a series of challenges which the former proposed to undertake ere he eventually settled himself in the exercise of his profession.

I remember being present at one of them, and a ludicrous exhibition it was. The parish priest, a red-faced, jocular little man, was president, and his curate, a scholar of six feet two inches in height, and a schoolmaster from the next parish, were judges. I will only touch upon two circumstances in

their conduct which evinced a close instinctive knowledge of human nature in the combatants. The master would not condescend to argue off his throne—a piece of policy to which, in my opinion, he owed his victory (for he won); whereas the pupil insisted that he should meet him on equal ground, face to face, in the lower end of the room. It was evident that the latter could not divest himself of his boyish terrors as long as the other sat, as it were, in the plenitude of his former authority, contracting his brows with habitual sternness, thundering out his arguments with a most menacing and stentorian voice, while he thumped his desk with his shut fist, or struck it with his great rule at the end of each argument, in a manner that made the youngster put his hands behind him several times, to be certain that that portion of his dress which is unmentionable was tight upon him.

If in these encounters the young candidate for the honours of the literary sceptre was not victorious, he again resumed his studies under his old preceptor with renewed vigour and becoming humility; but if he put the schoolmaster down, his next object was to seek out some other teacher whose celebrity was unclouded within his own range. With him he had a fresh encounter, and its result was similar to what I have already related: if victorious, he sought out another and more learned opponent; and if defeated, he became the pupil of his conqueror—going night about, during his sojourn at the school, with the neighbouring farmers' sons, whom he assisted in their studies as a compensation for his support. He was called during these peregrinations the Poor Scholar—a character which secured him the esteem and hospitable attention of the peasantry, who never fail in respect to any one characterised by a zeal for learning and knowledge.

In this manner he proceeded, a literary knight-errant, filled with a chivalrous love of letters which would have done honour to the most learned peripatetic of them all; enlarging his own powers, and making fresh acquisitions of knowledge as he went along. His contests, his defeats, and his triumphs, of course, were frequent; and his habits of thinking and reasoning must have been considerably improved, his acquaintance with classical and mathematical authors rendered

more intimate, and his powers of illustration and comparison more clear and happy. After three or four years spent in this manner, he usually returned to his native place, sent another challenge to the schoolmaster, in the capacity of a candidate for his situation, and if successful, drove him out of the district, and established himself in his situation. The vanquished master sought a new district, sent a new challenge in his turn to some other teacher, and usually put him to flight in the same manner. The terms of defeat or victory, according to their application, were called "sacking" and "bogging."

"There was a great argument entirely, sir," said a peasant once, when speaking of these contests; "'twas at the chapel on Sunday week, betune young Tom Brady, that was a poor scholar in Munsther, and Mr. Hartigan, the schoolmaster."

"And who was victorious?" I inquired.

"Why, sir, and maybe 'twas young Brady that didn't sack him clane, before the priest and all, and went nigh to bog the priest himself in Greek. His reverence was only two words beyant him. But he sacked the masther, anyhow, and showed him in the Grammatical and Dixonary where he was wrong."

"And what is Brady's object in life?" I asked. "What does he intend to do?"

"Intend to do, is it? I'm tould nothing less nor going into Thrinity College in Dublin, and expects to bate them all there, out and out. He's first to make something they call a seizure;[1] and afther making that good, he's to be a counsellor. So, sir, you see what it is to resave good schoolin' and to have the larnin'; but, indeed, it's Brady that's the great head-piece entirely."

Unquestionably many who received instruction in this manner have distinguished themselves in the Dublin University; and I have no hesitation in saying that young men educated in Irish hedge schools, as they were called, have proved themselves to be better classical scholars and mathematicians, generally speaking, than any proportionate

[1] Sizar.

number of those educated in our first-rate academies. The Munster masters have long been, and still are, particularly celebrated for making excellent classical and mathematical scholars.

That a great deal of ludicrous pedantry generally accompanied this knowledge is not at all surprising, when we consider the rank these worthy teachers held in life, and the stretch of inflation at which their pride was kept by the profound reverence excited by their learning among the people. It is equally true that each of them had a stock of *crambos* ready for accidental encounter which would have puzzled Euclid or Sir Isaac Newton himself; but even these trained their minds to habits of acuteness and investigation. When a schoolmaster of this class had established himself as a good mathematician, the predominant enjoyment of his heart and life was to write the epithet Philomath after his name; and this, whatever document he subscribed, was never omitted. If he witnessed a will, it was Timothy Fagan, Philomath; if he put his name to a promissory note, it was Tim. Fagan, Philomath; if he addressed a love-letter to his sweetheart, it was still Timothy Fagan—or whatever the name might be—Philomath; and this was always written in legible and distinct copyhand, sufficiently large to attract the observation of the reader.

It was also usual for a man who had been a pre-eminent and extraordinary scholar to have the epithet GREAT prefixed to his name. I remember one of this description, who was called the Great O'Brien, *par excellence.* In the latter years of his life he gave up teaching, and led a circulating life, going round from school to school, and remaining a week or a month alternately among his brethren. His visits were considered an honour, and raised considerably the literary character of those with whom he resided; for he spoke of dunces with the most dignified contempt, and the general impression was that he would scorn even to avail himself of their hospitality. Like most of his brethren, he could not live without the *poteen;* and his custom was to drink a pint of it in its native purity before he entered into any literary contest, or made any display of his learning at wakes or other Irish festivities; and most certainly, however

blamable the practice, and injurious to health and morals, it threw out his talents and his powers in a most surprising manner.

It was highly amusing to observe the peculiarity which the consciousness of superior knowledge impressed upon the conversation and personal appearance of this decaying race. Whatever might have been the original conformation of their physical structure, it was sure, by the force of acquired habit, to transform itself into a stiff, erect, consequential, and unbending manner, ludicrously characteristic of an inflated sense of their extraordinary knowledge, and a proud and commiserating contempt of the dark ignorance by which, in despite of their own light, they were surrounded. Their conversation, like their own *crambos,* was dark and difficult to be understood; their words truly sesquipedalian; their voice loud and commanding in its tones; their deportment grave and dictatorial, but completely indescribable, and certainly original to the last degree, in those instances where the ready blundering but genuine humour of their country maintained an unyielding rivalry in their disposition against the natural solemnity which was considered necessary to keep up the due dignity of their character.

In many of these persons where the original humour and gaiety of the disposition were known, all efforts at the grave and dignified were complete failures, and these were enjoyed by the peasantry and their own pupils nearly with the sensations which the enactment of Hamlet by Liston would necessarily produce. At all events, their education, allowing for the usual exceptions, was by no means superficial; and the reader has already received a sketch of the trials which they had to undergo before they considered themselves qualified to enter upon the duties of their calling. Their life was, in fact, a state of literary warfare; and they felt that a mere elementary knowledge of their business would have been insufficient to carry them with suitable credit through the attacks to which they were exposed from travelling teachers, whose mode of establishing themselves in schools was, as I said, by driving away the less qualified and usurping their places. This, according to the law of opinion and the custom which prevailed, was very easily effected, for

the peasantry uniformly encouraged those whom they supposed to be the most competent. As to moral or religious instruction, neither was expected from them, so that the indifference of the moral character was no bar to their success.

The village of Findramore was situated at the foot of a long green hill, the outline of which formed a low arch as it rose to the eye against the horizon. This hill was studded with clumps of beeches, and sometimes enclosed as a meadow. In the month of July, when the grass on it was long, many an hour have I spent in solitary enjoyment, watching the wavy motion produced upon its pliant surface by the sunny winds, or the flight of the cloud shadows, like gigantic phantoms, as they swept rapidly over it; whilst the murmur of the rocking trees, and the glancing of their bright leaves in the sun, produced a heartfelt pleasure, the very memory of which rises in my imagination like some fading recollection of a brighter world.

At the foot of this hill ran a clear, deep-banked river, bounded on one side by a slip of rich level meadow, and on the other by a kind of common for the village geese, whose white feathers during the summer season lay scattered over its green surface. It was also the playground for the boys of the village school; for there ran that part of the river which, with very correct judgment, the urchins had selected as their bathing-place. A little slope or watering-ground in the bank brought them to the edge of the stream, where the bottom fell away into the fearful depths of the whirlpool under the hanging oak on the other bank. Well do I remember the first time I ventured to swim across it, and even yet do I see in imagination the two bunches of water flaggons on which the inexperienced swimmers trusted themselves in the water.

About two hundred yards above this the *boreen* which led from the village to the main road crossed the river by one of those old narrow bridges whose arches rise like round ditches across the road—an almost impassable barrier to horse and car. On passing the bridge in a northern direction you

found a range of low thatched houses on each side of the road; and if one o'clock, the hour of dinner, drew near, you might observe columns of blue smoke curling up from a row of chimneys, some made of wicker creels plastered over with a rich coat of mud; some of old, narrow, bottomless tubs; and others, with a greater appearance of taste, ornamented with thick circular ropes of straw, sewed together like bees' "skeps" with the peel of a brier; and many having nothing but the open vent above. But the smoke by no means escaped by its legitimate aperture, for you might observe little clouds of it bursting out of the doors and windows; the panes of the latter, being mostly stopped at other times with old hats and rags, were now left entirely open for the purpose of giving it a free escape.

Before the doors, on right and left, was a series of dunghills, each with its concomitant sink of green, rotten water; and if it happened that a stout-looking woman, with watery eyes, and a yellow cap hung loosely upon her matted locks, came, with a chubby urchin on one arm and a pot of dirty water in her hand, its unceremonious ejection into the aforesaid sink would be apt to send you up the village with your finger and thumb (for what purpose you would yourself perfectly understand) closely, but not knowingly, applied to your nostrils. But independently of this, you would be apt to have other reasons for giving your horse, whose heels are by this time surrounded by a dozen of barking curs and the same number of shouting urchins, a pretty sharp touch of the spurs, as well as for complaining bitterly of the odour of the atmosphere. It is no landscape without figures; and you might notice, if you are, as I suppose you to be, a man of observation, in every sink, as you pass along, a "slip of a pig," stretched in the middle of the mud, the very *beau ideal* of luxury, giving occasionally a long luxuriant grunt, highly expressive of his enjoyment; or perhaps an old farrower lying in indolent repose, with half a dozen young ones, justling each other for their draught, and punching her belly with their little snouts, reckless of the fumes they are creating; whilst the loud crow of the cock, as he confidently flaps his wings on his own dunghill, gives the warning note for the hour of dinner.

As you advance, you will also perceive several faces thrust out of the doors, and rather than miss a sight of you, a grotesque visage peeping by a short cut through the paneless windows—or a tattered female flying to snatch up her urchin that has been tumbling itself, heels up, in the dust of the road, lest "the gintleman's horse might ride over it;" and if you happen to look behind, you may observe a shaggy-headed youth in tattered frieze, with one hand thrust indolently in his breast, standing at the door, in conversation with the inmates, a broad grin of sarcastic ridicule on his face, in the act of breaking a joke or two upon yourself or your horse; or perhaps your jaw may be saluted with a lump of clay, just hard enough not to fall asunder as it flies, cast by some ragged *gorsoon* from behind a hedge, who squats himself in a ridge of corn to avoid detection.

Seated upon a hob at the door, you may observe a toil-worn man, without coat or waistcoat, his red, muscular, sun-burnt shoulder peering through the remnant of a shirt, mending his shoes with a piece of twisted flax, called a *lingel*, or perhaps sewing two footless stockings (or *martyeens*) to his coat as a substitute for sleeves.

In the gardens, which are usually fringed with nettles, you will see a solitary labourer, working with that carelessness and apathy that characterise an Irishman when he labours for himself—leaning upon his spade to look after you, and glad of any excuse to be idle.

The houses, however, are not all such as I have described—far from it. You see here and there, between the more humble cabins, a stout, comfortable-looking farmhouse, with ornamental thatching and well-glazed windows; adjoining to which is a hagyard, with five or six large stacks of corn, well trimmed and roped, and a fine, yellow, weather-beaten old hayrick, half cut—not taking into account twelve or thirteen circular strata of stones that mark out the foundations on which others had been raised. Neither is the rich smell of oaten or wheaten bread, which the good wife is baking on the griddle, unpleasant to your nostrils; nor would the bubbling of a large pot, in which you might see, should you chance to enter, a prodigious square of fat, yellow, and almost transparent bacon tumbling about, be an unpleasant

object—truly, as it hangs over a large fire, with well-swept hearthstone, it is in good keeping with the white settle and chairs, and the dresser with noggins, wooden trenchers, and pewter dishes perfectly clean, and as well polished as a French courtier.

As you leave the village, you have, to the left, a view of the hill which I have already described, and to the right a level expanse of fertile country, bounded by a good view of respectable mountains peering decently into the sky; and in a line that forms an acute angle from the point of the road where you ride is a delightful valley, in the bottom of which shines a pretty lake; and a little beyond, on the slope of a green hill, rises a splendid house, surrounded by a park, well wooded and stocked with deer. You have now topped the little hill above the village, and a straight line of level road, a mile long, goes forward to a country town which lies immediately behind that white church, with its spire cutting into the sky, before you. You descend on the other side, and having advanced a few perches, look to the left, where you see a long thatched chapel, only distinguished from a dwelling-house by its want of chimneys, and a small stone cross that stands on the top of the eastern gable. Behind it is a graveyard, and beside it a snug public-house, well white-washed. Then, to the right, you observe a door apparently in the side of a clay bank, which rises considerably above the pavement of the road. What! you ask yourself, can this be a human habitation?—but ere you have time to answer the question, a confused buzz of voices from within reaches your ear, and the appearance of a little *gorsoon*, with a red, close-cropped head and Milesian face, having in his hand a short white stick, or the thigh bone of a horse, which you at once recognise as "the pass" of a village school, gives you the full information. He has an inkhorn, covered with leather, dangling at the button-hole (for he has long since played away the buttons) of his frieze jacket—his mouth is circumscribed with a streak of ink—his pen is stuck knowingly behind his ear—his shins are dotted over with blisters, black, red, and blue—on each heel a kibe—his "leather crackers," *videlicet*, breeches, shrunk up upon him, and only reaching as far down as the caps of his knees. Having spied you, he

places his hand over his brows, to throw back the dazzling light of the sun, and peers at you from under it, till he breaks out into a laugh, exclaiming, half to himself, and half to you—

"You a gintleman!—no, nor one of your breed never was, you procthorin' thief you!"

You are now immediately opposite the door of the seminary, when half a dozen of those seated next it notice you.

"Oh, sir, here's a gintleman on a horse!—masther, sir, here's a gintleman on a horse, wid boots and spurs on him, that's looking in at us."

"Silence!" exclaims the master. "Back from the door, boys; rehearse—every one of you rehearse, I say, you Bœotians, till the gintleman goes past!"

"I want to go out, if you plase, sir."

"No, you don't, Phelim."

"I do indeed, sir."

"What! is it afther conthradictin' me you'd be?—don't you see the porter's out, and you can't go."

"Well, 'tis Mat Meehan has it, sir, and he's out this half-hour, sir—I can't stay in, sir—iphfff—iphfff!"

"You want to be idling your time looking at the gintleman, Phelim."

"No, indeed, sir—iphfff!"

"Phelim, I know you of ould—go to your sate—I tell you, Phelim, you were born for the encouragement of the hemp manufacture, and you'll die promoting it."

In the meantime the master puts his head out of the door, his body stooped to a "half bend"—a phrase, and the exact curve which it forms, I leave for the present to your own sagacity—and surveys you until you pass. That is an Irish hedge school, and the personage who follows you with his eye a hedge schoolmaster. His name is Matthew Kavanagh; and as you seem to consider his literary establishment rather a curiosity in its kind, I will, if you be disposed to hear it, give you the history of him and his establishment, beginning, in the first place, with—

THE ABDUCTION OF MAT KAVANAGH

THE HEDGE SCHOOLMASTER

For about three years before the period of which I write, the village of Findramore and the parish in which it lay were without a teacher. Mat's predecessor was a James Garraghty, a lame young man, the son of a widow, whose husband lost his life in attempting to extinguish a fire that broke out in the dwelling-house of Squire Johnston, a neighbouring magistrate. The son was a boy at the time of this disaster, and the Squire, as some compensation for the loss of his father's life in his service, had him educated at his own expense—that is to say, he gave the master who taught in the village orders to educate him gratuitously, on the condition of being horsewhipped out of the parish if he refused. As soon as he considered himself qualified to teach, he opened a school in the village on his own account, where he taught until his death, which happened in less than a year after the commencement of his little seminary. The children usually assembled in his mother's cabin; but as she did not long survive the son, this, which was at best a very miserable residence, soon tottered to the ground. The roof and thatch were burned for firing; the mud gables fell in, and were overgrown with grass, nettles, and docks; and nothing remained but a foot or two of the little clay side-walls, which presented, when associated with the calamitous fate of their inoffensive inmates, rather a touching image of ruin upon a small scale.

Garraghty had been attentive to his little pupils, and his instructions were sufficient to give them a relish for education—a circumstance which did not escape the observation of their parents, who duly appreciated it. His death, however, deprived them of this advantage; and as schoolmasters, under the old system, were always at a premium, it so happened that for three years afterwards none of that class presented himself to their acceptance. Many a trial had been made, and many a sly offer held out as a lure to the neighbouring teachers, but they did not take; for although the country

was densely inhabited, yet it was remarked that no schoolmaster ever "thruv" in the neighbourhood of Findramore. The place, in fact, had got a bad name. Garraghty died, it was thought, of poverty, a disease to which the Findramore schoolmasters had been always known to be subject. His predecessor, too, was hanged, along with two others, for burning the house of an "Aagint."

Then the Findramore boys were not easily dealt with, having an ugly habit of involving their unlucky teachers in those quarrels which they kept up with the Ballyscanlan boys, a fighting clan that lived at the foot of the mountains above them. These two factions, when they met, whether at fair or market, wake or wedding, could never part without carrying home on each side a dozen or two of bloody cockscombs. For these reasons the parish of Aughindrum had for a few years been afflicted with an extraordinary dearth of knowledge; the only literary establishment which flourished in it being a parochial institution, which, however excellent in design, yet, like too many establishments of the same nature, degenerated into a source of knowledge, morals, and education exceedingly dry and unproductive to every person except the master, who was enabled by his honest industry to make a provision for his family absolutely surprising when we consider the moderate nature of his ostensible income. It was, in fact, like a well dried up, to which scarcely any one ever thinks of going for water.

Such a state of things, however, could not last long. The youth of Findramore were parched for want of the dew of knowledge; and their parents and grown brethren met one Saturday evening in Barny Brady's shebeen-house to take into consideration the best means for procuring a resident schoolmaster for the village and neighbourhood. It was a difficult point, and required great dexterity of management to enable them to devise any effectual remedy for the evil which they felt. There were present at this council Tim Dolan, the senior of the village, and his three sons, Jem Coogan, Brian Murphy, Paddy Delany, Owen Roe O'Neil, Jack Traynor, and Andy Connell, with five or six others, whom it is not necessary to enumerate.

"Bring us in a quart, Barny," said Dolan to Brady, who on

this occasion we must designate as the host, "and let it be rale hathen."

"What do you mane, Tim?" replied the host.

"I mane," continued Dolan, "stuff that was never christened, man alive."

"Thin, I'll bring you the same that Father Maguire got last night on his way home, afther anointin' ould Katty Duffy," replied Brady. "I'm sure, whatever I might be afther givin' to strangers, Tim, I'd be long sorry to give yees anything but the right sort."

"That's a gay man, Barny," said Traynor; "but off wid you like shot, an' let us get it under our tooth first, an' then we'll tell you more about it. A big rogue is the same Barny," he added, after Brady had gone to bring in the *poteen*, "an' never sells a dhrop that's not one whisky and five wathers."

"But he couldn't expose it on you, Jack," observed Connell; "you're too ould a hand about the pot for that. Warn't you in the mountains last week?"

"Ay; but the curse of Cromwell upon the thief of a gauger, Simpson—himself and a pack o' redcoats surrounded us when we war beginnin' to 'double,' and the purtiest 'runnin'' that ever you seen was lost, for you see, before you could cross yourself, we had the bottoms knocked clane out of the vessels; so that the villains didn't get a hole in our coats, as they thought they would."

"I tell you," observed O'Neil, "there's a bad pill somewhere about us."

"Ay is there, Owen," replied Traynor; "and what is more, I don't think he's a hundred miles from the place where we're sittin' in."

"Faith, maybe so, Jack," returned the other.

"I'd never give in to that," said Murphy. "'Tis Barny Brady that would never turn informer; the same thing isn't in him, nor in any of his breed—there's not a man in the parish I'd thrust sooner."

"I'd jist thrust him," replied Traynor, "as far as I could throw a cow by the tail. *Arrah*, what's the rason that the gauger never looks next or near his place, an' it's well known that he sells *poteen* widout a license, though he goes past his door wanst a week?"

"What the h—— is keepin' him at all?" inquired one of Dolan's sons.

"Look at him," said Traynor, "comin' in out of the garden—how much afeard he is! keepin' the whisky in a phatie ridge—an' I'd kiss the book that he brought that bottle out in his pocket, instead of diggin' it up out o' the garden."

Whatever Brady's usual habits of christening his *poteen* might have been, that which he now placed before them was good. He laid the bottle on a little deal table with cross legs, and along with it a small drinking-glass, fixed in a bit of flat circular wood, as a substitute for the original bottom, which had been broken. They now entered upon the point in question without further delay.

"Come, Tim," said Coogan, "you're the oldest man, and must spake first."

"Throth, man," replied Dolan, "beggin' your pardon, I'll dhrink first *shud-urth*, your sowl: success, boys—glory to ourselves; and confusion to the Scanlan boys, any way."

"And maybe," observed Connell, "'tis we that didn't lick them well in the last fair — they're not able to meet the Findramore birds even on their own walk."

"Well, boys," said Delany, "about the masther? Our childher will grow up like *bullockeens*, widout knowing a hap'orth; and larning, you see, is a burdyen that's asy carried."

"Ay," observed O'Neil, "as Solvester Maguire, the poet, used to say:—

> "'Labour for larnin' before you grow ould,
> For larning is better nor riches nor gould;
> Riches an' gould they may vanquish away,
> But larnin' alone it will never decay.'"

"Success, Owen! Why, you might put down the pot and warm an air to it," said Murphy.

"Well, boys, are we all safe?" asked Traynor.

"Safe!" said old Dolan. "*Arrah*, what are you talkin' about? Sure, 'tisn't of that same *spalpeen* of a gauger that we'd be afraid!"

During this observation young Dolan pressed Traynor's

foot under the table, and they both went out for about five minutes.

"Father," said the son, when he and Traynor re-entered the room, "you're a-wanting home."

"Who wants me, Larry, *avick?*" says the father.

The son immediately whispered him for a moment, when the old man instantly rose, got his hat, and after drinking another bumper of the *poteen*, departed.

"'Twas hardly worth while," said Delany; "the ould fellow's mettle to the backbone, an' would never show the *garran-bane* at any rate, even if he knew all about it."

"Bad end to the syllable I'd let the same ould cock hear," said the son; "the divil thrust any man that didn't "switch the primer"[1] for it, though he is my father. But now, boys, that the coast's clear, and all safe—where will we get a schoolmaster? Mat Kavanagh won't budge from the Scanlan boys, even if we war to put our hands undher his feet; and small blame to him, when he heads them—sure, you would not expect him to be a thraitor to his own?"

"Faith, the *gorsoons* is in a bad state," said Murphy; "but, boys, where will we get a man that's 'up'? Why, I know 'tis betther to have anybody nor be without one; but we might kill two birds wid one stone—if we could get a masther that would carry 'Articles,'[2] an' swear in the boys from time to time—an' between ourselves, if there's any danger of the hemp, we may as well lay it upon strange shoulders."

"Ay, but since Corrigan swung for the Aagint," replied Delany, "they're a little modest in havin' act or part wid us; but the best plan is to get an advartisement wrote out, an' have it posted on the chapel door."

This hint was debated with much earnestness; but as they were really anxious to have a master—in the first place, for the simple purpose of educating their children; and in the next, for filling the situation of director and regulator of their illegal Ribbon meetings—they determined on penning an advertisement, according to the suggestion of Delany. After drinking another bottle, and amusing themselves with some

[1] Take an oath.
[2] A copy of the Whiteboy oath and regulations.

further chat, one of the Dolans undertook to draw up the advertisement, which ran as follows :—

"*ADVARTAAISMENT.*

"*Notis to schoolmasthers, and to all others whom it may consarn.*

"WANTED,

"For the nabourhood and vircinity of the Townland of Findramore, in the Parish of Aughindrum, in the Barony of Lisnamoghry, County of Sligo, Province of Connaught, Ireland.

"TO SCHOOLMASTHERS.

"Take Notis—That any Schoolmasther who understands Spellin' gramatically—Readin' and Writin', in the raal way, according to the Dixonary—Arithmatick, that is to say, the five common rules, namely, simple addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division—and addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, of Dives's denominations. Also reduction up and down—cross multiplication of coin—the Rule of Three direck—the Rule of Three in verse—the double Rule of Three—Frackshins taught according to the vulgar and decimatin' method; and must be well practised to tache the Findramore boys how to manage the Scuffle.[1]

"N.B. He must be well grounded in that. Practis, Discount, and *Rebatin'*. N.B. Must be well grounded in that also.

"Tret and Tare—Fellowship—Allegation—Barther—Rates per Scent—Intherest—Exchange—Prophet in Loss—the Square Root—the Kibe Root—Hippothenuse—Arithmatical and Gommetrical Purgation—Compound Intherest—Loggerheadism—Questions for Exercise, and the Conendix to Algibbra. He must also know Jommithry accordin' to Grunther's scale—the Castigation of the Klipsticks—Surveying and the use of the Jacob-staff.

"N.B. Would get a good dale of Surveyin' to do in the vircinity of Findramore, particularly in *Con-acre time.* If he

[1] An exercise in fractions.

knew the use of the globe, it would be an accusation. He must also understand the Three Sets of Book-keeping, by single and double enthry, particularly Loftus and Company of Paris, their Account of Cash and Company. And above all things, he must know how to tache the Sarvin' of Mass in Latin, and be able to read Doctor Gallaher's Irish Sarmints, and explain Kolumkill's and Pastorini's Prophecies.

"N.B. If he understands Cudgel-fencin', it would be an accusation also—but mustn't tache us wid a staff that bends in the middle, bekase it breaks one's head across the guard. Any schoolmaster capacious and collified to instruct in the above-mintioned branches would get a good school in the townland of Findramore and its vircinity, be well fed, an' get the hoith o' good livin' among the farmers, an' would be ped—

"For Book-keepin', the three sets, *a ginny and a half.*

"For gommithry, &c., *half-a-ginny a quarther.*

"Arithmatic, *aight and three-hapuns.*

"Readin', Writin', &c., *six Hogs.*

"*Given under our hands, this 32nd of June,* 18004.

"Larry Dolan.
"Dick Dolan, his × mark.
"Jem Coogan, his × mark.
"Brine Murphy.
"Paddy Delany, his × mark.
"Jack Traynor.
"Andy Connell.
"Owen Roe O'Neil, his × mark.

"N.B. *By making airly application to any of the undhermintioned he will hear of further particklers;* and if they find that he will shoot them, he may expect the best o' thratement, an' be well fed among the farmers.

"N.B. Would get also a good night-school among the vircinity."

Having penned the above advertisement, it was carefully posted early the next morning on the chapel doors, with an expectation on the part of the patrons that it would not be wholly fruitless. The next week, however, passed without

an application—the second also—and the third produced the same result; nor was there the slightest prospect of a schoolmaster being blown by any wind to the lovers of learning at Findramore. In the meantime the Ballyscanlan boys took care to keep up the ill-natured prejudice which had been circulated concerning the fatality that uniformly attended such schoolmasters as settled there; and when this came to the ears of the Findramore folk, it was once more resolved that the advertisement should be again put up, with a clause containing an explanation on that point. The clause ran as follows:—

"N.B. The two last masters that was hanged out of Findramore, that is, Mickey Corrigan, who was hanged for killing the Aagint, and Jem Garraghty, that died of a declension—Jem died in quensequence of ill health, and Mickey was hanged contrary to his own wishes; so that it wasn't either of their faults—as witness our hands this 27th of July.

"Dick Dolan, his × mark."

This explanation, however, was as fruitless as the original advertisement, and week after week passed over without an offer from a single candidate. The "vircinity" of Findramore and its "nabourhood" seemed devoted to ignorance, and nothing remained except another effort at procuring a master by some more ingenious contrivance.

Debate after debate was consequently held in Barny Brady's; and until a fresh suggestion was made by Delany, the prospect seemed as bad as ever. Delany, at length, fell upon a new plan; and it must be confessed that it was marked in a peculiar manner by a spirit of originality and enterprise—it being nothing less than a proposal to carry off, by force or stratagem, Mat Kavanagh, who was at that time fixed in the throne of literature among the Ballyscanlan boys, quite unconscious of the honourable translation to the neighbourhood of Findramore which was intended for him. The project, when broached, was certainly a startling one, and drove most of them to a pause before they were sufficiently collected to give an opinion on its merits.

"Nothin', boys, is asier," said Delany. "There's to be a

patthern in Ballymagowan on next Sathurday — an' that's jist half-way betune ourselves and the Scanlan boys. Let us musther an' go there, anyhow. We can keep an eye on Mat widout much trouble, an' when opportunity sarves, nick him at wanst, an' off wid him clane."

"But," said Traynor, "what would we do wid him when he'd be here? Wouldn't he cut an' run the first opportunity?"

"How can he, ye *omadhawn*, if we put a manwill in our pocket an' sware him? But we'll butther him up when he's among us; or, be me sowks, if it goes to that, force him either to settle wid ourselves, or make himself scarce in the counthry entirely."

"Divil a much force it'll take to keep him, I'm thinkin'," observed Murphy. "He'll have three times a betther school here; and if he was wanst settled, I'll engage he would take to it kindly."

"See here, boys," says Dick Dolan, in a whisper, "if that bloody villain Brady isn't afther standin' this quarter of an hour strivin' to hear what we're about; but it's well we didn't bring up anything consarnin' the other business. Didn't I tell yees the desate was in 'im? Look at his shadow on the wall forninst us."

"Hould yer tongues, boys," said Traynor; "jist keep never mindin', and, be my sowks, I'll make him sup sorrow for that thrick."

"You had betther neither make nor meddle with him," observed Delany; "jist put him out o' that; but don't raise yer hand to him, or he'll sarve you as he did Jem Flanagan—put ye three or four months in the Stone Jug."[1]

Traynor, however, had gone out while he was speaking, and in a few minutes dragged in Brady, whom he caught in the very act of eavesdropping.

"Jist come in, Brady," said Traynor, as he dragged him along—"walk in, man alive; sure and sich an honest man as you are needn't be afeard of lookin' his friend in the face! Ho! an' be my sowl, is it a spy we've got? and, I suppose, would be an informer, too, if he had heard anything to tell!"

"What's the manin' of this, boys?" exclaimed the others,

[1] Popular term for the gaol.

feigning ignorance. "Let the honest man go, Traynor. What do ye haul him that a-way for, ye gallis pet?"

"Honest!" replied Traynor—"how very honest he is, the desavin' villain, to be standin' at the windy there, wantin' to overhear the little harmless talk we had."

"Come, Traynor," said Brady, seizing him in his turn by the neck; "take your hands off of me, or, bad fate to me, but I'll lave ye a mark."

Traynor, in his turn, had his hand twisted in Brady's cravat, which he drew tightly about his neck, until the other got nearly black in the face.

"Let me go, you villain!" exclaimed Brady, "or, by this blessed night that's in it, it'll be worse for you."

"Villain! is it?" replied Traynor, making a blow at him, whilst Brady snatched at a penknife which one of the others had placed on the table after picking the tobacco out of his pipe — intending either to stab Traynor or to cut the knot of the cravat by which he was held. The others, however, interfered, and prevented further mischief.

"Brady," said Traynor, "you'll rue this night, if ever a man did, you treacherous, informin' villain! What an honest spy we have among us!—and a short course to you!"

"Oh, hould yer tongue, Traynor!" replied Brady; "I blieve it's best known who is both the spy and the informer. The divil a pint of *poteen* ever you'll run in this parish until you clear yourself of bringing the gauger on the Traceys, bekase they tuck Mick M'Kew in preference to yourself to run it for them."

Traynor made another attempt to strike him, but was prevented. The rest now interfered; and in the course of an hour or so an adjustment took place.

Brady took up the tongs, and swore "by that blessed iron" that he neither heard nor intended to hear anything they said, and this exculpation was followed by a fresh bottle at his own expense.

"You *omadhawn*," said he to Traynor, "I was only puttin' up a dozen o' bottles into the tatch of the house when you thought I was listenin';" and as a proof of the truth of this, he brought them out and showed them some bottles of *poteen*, neatly covered up under the thatch.

Before their separation they finally planned the abduction of Kavanagh from the Patron on the Saturday following, and after drinking another round, went home to their respective dwellings.

In this speculation, however, they experienced a fresh disappointment; for ere Saturday arrived, whether in consequence of secret intimation of their intention from Brady or some other friend, or in compliance with the offer of a better situation, the fact was that Mat Kavanagh had removed to another school, distant about eighteen miles from Findramore. But they were not to be outdone; a new plan was laid, and in the course of the next week a dozen of the most enterprising and intrepid of the "boys," mounted each upon a good horse, went to Mat's new residence for the express purpose of securing him.

Perhaps our readers may scarcely believe that a love of learning was so strong among the inhabitants of Findramore as to occasion their taking such remarkable steps for establishing a schoolmaster among them; but the country was densely inhabited, the rising population exceedingly numerous, and the outcry for a schoolmaster amongst the parents of the children loud and importunate. Besides this, the illegal principles of Whiteboyism were as deeply rooted in that neighbourhood as in others; and the young men stood in need of some person who might regulate their proceedings, keep their registries, preside at and appoint their meetings, and organise with sufficient skill and precision, not only the vast numbers who had been already enrolled as members, but who were putting forward their claims day after day to be admitted as such.

God knows it is no wonder that Ireland should be as she is, and as she long has been, when we consider that those who conducted the education of her peasantry were the most active instruments in disseminating among the rising generation such pernicious principles as those which characterise this system, so deeply rooted among the people.

The fact was that a double motive stimulated the inhabitants of Findramore in their efforts to procure a master. The old and middle-aged heads of families were actuated by a simple wish, inseparable from Irishmen, to have their children educated; and the young men, not only by a deter-

mination to have a properly qualified person to preside at their nightly orgies, but an inclination to improve themselves in reading, writing, and arithmetic. The circumstance I am now relating is one which actually took place; and any man acquainted with the remote parts of Ireland may have often seen bloody and obstinate quarrels among the peasantry in vindicating a priority of claim to the local residence of a schoolmaster among them. I could, within my own experience, relate two or three instances of this nature.

It was one Saturday night in the latter end of the month of May that a dozen Findramore "boys," as they were called, set out upon this most singular of all literary speculations, resolved, at whatever risk, to secure the person and effect the permanent bodily presence among them of the redoubtable Mat Kavanagh. Each man was mounted on a horse, and one of them brought a spare steed for the accommodation of the schoolmaster. The caparison of this horse was somewhat remarkable. It consisted of a wooden straddle, such as is used by the peasantry for carrying wicker panniers or *creels*, which are hung upon two wooden pins that stand up out of its sides. Under it was a straw mat, to prevent the horse's back from being stripped by the straddle. On one side of this hung a large *creel*, and on the other a strong sack, tied round a stone of sufficient weight to balance the empty *creel*. The night was warm and clear; the moon and stars all threw their mellow light from a serene, unclouded sky; and the repose of nature in the short nights of this delightful season resembles that of a young virgin of sixteen—still, light, and glowing. Their way, for the most part of their journey, lay through a solitary mountain road; and as they did not undertake the enterprise without a good stock of *poteen*, their light-hearted songs and choruses awoke the echoes that slept in the mountain glens as they went along. The adventure, it is true, had as much of frolic as of seriousness in it; and merely as the means of a day's fun for the boys, it was the more eagerly entered into.

It was about midnight when they left home, and as they did not wish to arrive at the village to which they were bound until the morning should be rather advanced, the journey was as slowly performed as possible. Every re-

markable object on the way was noticed, and its history, if any particular association was connected with it, minutely detailed whenever it happened to be known. When the sun rose, many beautiful green spots and hawthorn valleys excited, even from these unpolished and illiterate peasants, warm bursts of admiration at their fragrance and beauty. In some places the dark flowery heath clothed the mountains to the tops, from which the grey mists, lit by a flood of light, and breaking into masses before the morning breeze, began to descend into the valleys beneath them; whilst the voice of the grouse, the bleating of sheep and lambs, the pee-weet of the wheeling lapwing, and the song of the lark threw life and animation over the previous stillness of the country. Sometimes a shallow river would cross the road, winding off into a valley that was overhung on one side by rugged precipices clothed with luxuriant heath and wild ash; whilst on the other it was skirted by a long sweep of green-sward, skimmed by the twittering swallow, over which lay scattered numbers of sheep, cows, brood mares, and colts—many of them rising and stretching themselves ere they resumed their pasture, leaving the spots on which they lay of a deeper green. Occasionally, too, a sly-looking fox might be seen lurking about a solitary lamb, or brushing over the hills with a fat goose upon his back, retreating to his den among the inaccessible rocks, after having plundered some unsuspecting farmer.

As they advanced into the skirts of the cultivated country, they met many other beautiful spots of scenery among the upland, considerable portions of which, particularly in long sloping valleys that faced the morning sun, were covered with hazel and brushwood; where the unceasing and simple notes of the cuckoo were incessantly plied, mingled with the more mellow and varied notes of the thrush and blackbird. Sometimes the bright summer waterfall seemed in the rays of the sun like a column of light, and the springs that issued from the sides of the more distant and lofty mountains shone with a steady, dazzling brightness on which the eye could scarcely rest. The morning, indeed, was beautiful, the fields in bloom, and everything cheerful. As the sun rose in the heavens, nature began gradually to awaken into life and

happiness; nor was the natural grandeur of a Sabbath summer morning among these piles of magnificent mountains, nor its heartfelt but more artificial beauty in the cultivated country, lost even upon the unphilosophical "boys" of Findramore; so true is it that the appearance of nature will force enjoyment upon the most uncultivated heart.

When they had arrived within two miles of the little town in which Mat Kavanagh was fixed, they turned off into a deep glen a little to the left; and after having seated themselves under a whitethorn which grew on the banks of a rivulet, they began to devise the best immediate measures to be taken.

"Boys," said Tim Dolan, "how will we manage now with this thief of a schoolmaster, at all? Come, Jack Traynor, you that's up to still-house work—escapin' and carryin' away stills from gaugers, the bloody villains!—out wid yer spake, till we hear your opinion."

"Do ye think, boys," said Andy Connell, "that we could flatther him to come by fair manes?"

"Flatther him!" said Traynor; "and, by my sowl, if we flatther him at all, it must be by the hair of the head. No, no; let us bring him first whether he will or not, an' ax his consent aftherwards."

"I'll tell you what it is, boys," continued Connell—"I'll hould a wager, if you lave him to me, I'll bring him wid his own consint."

"No, nor sorra that you'll do, nor could do," replied Traynor; "for, along wid everything else, he thinks he's not jist doted on by the Findramore people, being one of the Ballyscanlan tribe. No, no; let two of us go to his place, and purtind that we have other business in the fair of Clansallagh on Monday next, and ax him in to dhrink, for he'll not refuse that, anyhow; then when he's half tipsy, ax him to convoy us this far; we'll then meet you here, an' tell him some palaver or other—sit down again where we are now, and afther making him dead dhrunk, hoist a big stone in the creel, and Mat in the sack on the other side, wid his head out, and off wid him; and he will know neither act nor part about it till we're at Findramore."

Having approved of this project, they pulled out each a

substantial complement of stout oaten bread, which served, along with the whisky, for breakfast. The two persons pitched on for decoying Mat were Dolan and Traynor, who accordingly set out, full of glee at the singularity and drollness of their undertaking. It is unnecessary to detail the ingenuity with which they went about it—because, in consequence of Kavanagh's love of drink, very little ingenuity was necessary. One circumstance, however, came to light which gave them much encouragement, and that was a discovery that Mat by no means relished his situation.

In the meantime, those who stayed behind in the glen felt their patience begin to flag a little, because of the delay made by the others, who had promised, if possible, to have the schoolmaster in the glen before two o'clock. But the fact was that Mat, who was far less deficient in hospitality than in learning, brought them into his house, and not only treated them to plenty of whisky, but made the wife prepare a dinner, for which he detained them, swearing that except they stopped to partake of it he would not convoy them to the place appointed. Evening was therefore tolerably far advanced when they made their appearance at the glen, in a very equivocal state of sobriety — Mat being by far the steadiest of the three, but still considerably the worse for what he had taken. He was now welcomed by a general huzza; and on his expressing his surprise at the appearances, they pointed to their horses, telling him that they were bound for the fair of Clansallagh, for the purpose of selling them. This was the more probable, as when a fair occurs in Ireland it is usual for cattle-dealers, particularly horse-jockeys, to effect sales and "show" their horses on the evening before.

Mat now sat down, and was vigorously plied with strong *poteen;* songs were sung, stories told, and every device resorted to that was calculated to draw out and heighten his sense of enjoyment; nor were their efforts without success, for in the course of a short time Mat was free from all earthly care, being incapable of either speaking or standing.

"Now, boys," said Dolan, "let us do the thing clane an' dacent. Let you, Jem Coogan, Brian Murphy, Paddy

Delany, and Andy Connell, go back, and tell the wife and two childher a cock-and-a-bull story about Mat—say that he is coming to Findramore for good and all, and that'll be thruth, you know; and that he ordhered yees to bring her and them afther him; and we can come back for the furniture to-morrow."

A word was enough—they immediately set off; and the others, not wishing that Mat's wife should witness the mode of his conveyance, proceeded home, for it was now dusk. The plan succeeded admirably; and in a short time the wife and children, mounted behind the "boys" on the horses, were on the way after them to Findramore.

The reader is already aware of the plan they had adopted for translating Mat; but as it was extremely original, I will explain it somewhat more fully. The moment the schoolmaster was intoxicated to the necessary point—that is to say, totally helpless and insensible—they opened the sack and put him in, heels foremost, tying it in such a way about his neck as might prevent his head from getting into it, thus avoiding the danger of suffocation. The sack, with Mat at full length in it, was then fixed to the pin of the straddle, so that he was in an erect posture during the whole journey. A *creel* was then hung at the other side, in which was placed a large stone of sufficient weight to preserve an equilibrium; and to prevent any accident, a droll fellow sat astride behind the straddle, amusing himself and the rest by breaking jokes upon the novelty of Mat's situation.

"Well, Mat, *ma bouchal*, how duv ye like your sitivation? I believe, for all your larnin', the Findramore boys have sacked you at last!"

"Ay," exclaimed another, "he is sacked at last, in spite of his Matthew-maticks."

"An', be my sowks," observed Traynor, "he'd be a long time goin' up a May-powl in the state he's in—his own snail would bate him."[1]

"Yes," said another; "but he desarves credit for travellin'

[1] An allusion to a question in Gough's "Arithmetic" which the hedge schoolmasters thought a difficult one.

from Clansallagh to Findramore widout layin' a foot to the ground—

'Wan day wid Captain Whisky I wrastled a fall,
But faith I was no match for the captain at all—
But faith I was no match for the captain at all,
Though the landlady's measures they were damnable small.
Tooral, looral, looral, looral, lido.'

Whoo — hurroo! my darlings — success to the Findramore boys! Hurroo—hurroo—the Findramore boys for ever!"

"Boys, did ever yees hear the song Mat made on Ned Mullen's fight wid Jemmy Connor's gander? Well, here it is, to the tune of 'Brian O'Lynn'—

'As Ned and the gander wor basting each other,
I hard a loud cry from the grey goose his mother;
I ran to assist him, wid my great speed,
But before I arrived the poor gander did bleed.
"Alas!" says the gander, "I'm very ill-trated,
For tracherous Mullen has me fairly defated;
Bud had you been here for to show me fair play,
I could leather his *puckan*[1] around the lee bray."'

"Bravo, Mat!" addressing the insensible schoolmaster—"success, poet! Hurroo for the Findramore boys! the Bridge boys for ever!"

They then commenced, in a tone of mock gravity, to lecture him upon his future duties—detailing the advantages of his situation, and the comforts he would enjoy among them; although they might as well have addressed themselves to the stone on the other side. In this manner they got along, amusing themselves at Mat's expense, and highly elated at the success of their undertaking. About two o'clock in the morning they reached the top of the little hill above the village, when, on looking back along the level stretch of road which I have already described, they noticed their companions, with Mat's wife and children, moving briskly after them. A general huzza now took place, which, in a few minutes, was answered by two or three dozen of the young folks, who were assembled in Barny Brady's, waiting

[1] Paunch.

for their arrival. The scene now became quite animated—cheer after cheer succeeded—jokes, laughter, and rustic wit, pointed by the spirit of Brady's *poteen*, flew briskly about. When Mat was unsacked, several of them came up, and shaking him cordially by the hand, welcomed him among them. To the kindness of this reception, however, Mat was wholly insensible, having been for the greater part of the journey in a profound sleep. The boys next slipped the loop of the sack off the straddle-pin; and carrying Mat into a farmer's house, they deposited him in a settle-bed, where he slept, unconscious of the journey he had performed, until breakfast-time the next morning. In the meantime the wife and children were taken care of by Mrs. Connell, who provided them with a bed and every other comfort which they could require. The next morning, when Mat awoke, his first call was for a drink. I should have here observed that Mrs. Kavanagh had been sent for by the good woman in whose house Mat had slept, that they might all breakfast and have a drop together, for they had already succeeded in reconciling her to the change.

"Wather!" said Mat—"a drink of wather, if it's to be had for love or money, or I'll split wid druth—I'm all in a state of conflagration; and my head—by the sowl of Newton, the inventor of fluxions, but my head is a complete illucidation of the centrifugal motion, so it is. Tundher-an-turf! is there no wather to be had? Nancy, I say, for God's sake, quicken yourself wid the hydraulics, or the best mathematician in Ireland's gone to the abode of Euclid and Pythagoras, that first invented the multiplication table."

On cooling his burning blood with the "hydraulics," he again lay down, with the intention of composing himself for another sleep; but his eye having noticed the novelty of his situation, he once more called Nancy.

"Nancy, *avourneen*," he inquired, "will you be afther resolving me one single proposition—Where am I at the present spaking? Is it in the Siminary at home, Nancy?"

Nancy had been desired to answer in the affirmative, hoping that if his mind was made easy on that point he might refresh himself by another hour or two's sleep, as he appeared to be not at all free from the effects of his previous intoxication.

"Why, Mat, jewel, where else would you be, *alanna*, but at home? Sure, isn't here Jack, an' Biddy, an' myself, Mat, *agra*, along wid me. Your head isn't well, but all you want is a good rousin' sleep."

"Very well, Nancy — very well; that's enough — quite satisfacthory—*quod erat demonstrandum*. May all kinds of bad luck rest upon the Findramore boys, anyway! The unlucky vagabonds—I'm the third they've done up. Nancy, off wid ye, like quicksilver, for the priest."

"The priest? Why, Mat, jewel, what puts that in your head? Sure, there's nothing wrong wid ye, only the sup o' drink you tuck yestherday."

"Go, woman," said Mat; "did you ever know me to make a false calculation? I tell you, I'm *non compos mentis* from head to heel. Head!—by my sowl, Nancy, it'll soon be a *caput mortuum* wid me—I'm far gone in a disease they call an ophtical delusion—the divil a thing less it is—me bein' in my own place, an' to think I'm lyin' in a settle-bed; that there is a large dresser, covered wid pewter dishes and plates; and, to crown all, the door on the wrong side of the house. Off wid ye, and tell his reverence that I want to be anointed, and to die in pace and charity wid all men. May the most especial kind of bad luck light down upon you, Findramore, and all that's in you, both man and baste—you have given me my gruel along wid the rest; but, thank God, you won't hang me, anyhow! Off, Nancy, for the priest, till I die like a Christian, in pace and forgiveness wid the world—All kinds of hard fortune to them! Make haste, woman, if you expect me to die like a Christian! If they had let me alone till I'd publish to the world my Treatise upon Conic Sections —but to be cut off on my march to fame. Another draught of the hydraulics, Nancy, an' then for the priest—but see, bring Father Connell, the curate, for he understands something about Matthew-maticks; an' never heed Father Roger, for little he knows about them, not even the difference between a right line—in the page of history, to his everlasting disgrace, be it recorded!"

"Mat," replied Nancy, scarcely preserving her gravity, "keep yourself from talkin', an' fall asleep, then you'll be well enough."

"Is there e'er a sup at all in the house?" said Mat—"if there is, let me get it; for there's an ould proverb, though it's a most unmathematical axiom as ever was invinted—'Try a hair of the same dog that bit you.' Give me a glass, Nancy, anyhow, an' you can go for Father Connell after. Oh, by the sowl of Isaac, that invinted fluxions, what's this for?"

A general burst of laughter followed this demand and ejaculation; and Mat sat up once more in the settle, and examined the place with keener scrutiny. Nancy herself laughed heartily, and as she handed him the full glass, entered into an explanation of the circumstances attending his translation.

Mat, at all times rather of a pliant disposition, felt rejoiced on finding that he was still *compos mentis;* and on hearing what took place, he could not help entering into the humour of the enterprise, at which he laughed as heartily as any of them.

"Mat," said the farmer and half a dozen of the neighbours, "you're a happy man; there's a hundred of the boys have a schoolhouse half built for you this same blessed sunshiny mornin', while you're lying at ase in your bed."

"By the sowl of Newton, that invinted fluxions!" replied Mat, "but I'll take revenge for the disgrace you put upon my profession by stringing up a schoolmaster among you, and I'll hang you all! It's death to stale a four-footed animal; but what do you desarve for stalin' a Christian baste, a two-legged schoolmaster without feathers, eighteen miles, and he not to know it?"

In the course of a short time Mat was dressed, and having found benefit from the "hair of the dog that bit him," he tried another glass, which strung his nerves, or, as he himself expressed it—"they've got the raal mathematical tinsion again." What the farmer said, however, about the schoolhouse had been true. Early that morning all the growing and grown young men of Findramore and its "vircinity" had assembled, selected a suitable spot, and, with merry hearts, were then busily engaged in erecting a schoolhouse for their general accommodation.

The manner of building hedge schoolhouses being rather curious, I will describe it. The usual spot selected for their

erection is a ditch[1] on the roadside, in some situation where there will be as little damp as possible. From such a spot an excavation is made equal to the size of the building, so that when this is scooped out, the back side-wall and the two gables are already formed, the banks being dug perpendicularly. The front side-wall, with a window in each side of the door, is then built of clay or green sods laid along in rows; the gables are also topped with sods, and perhaps a row or two laid upon the back side-wall if it should be considered too low. Having got the erection of Mat's house thus far, they procured a scraw-spade, and repaired with a couple of dozen of cars to the next bog, from which they cut the light heathy surface in strips the length of the roof. A scraw-spade is an instrument resembling the letter T, with an iron plate at the lower end, considerably bent, and well adapted to the purpose for which it is intended. Whilst one party cut the scraws, another bound the "couples" and "bauks," and a third cut as many green branches as were sufficient to wattle it. The couples, being bound, were raised, the ribs laid on, then the wattles, and afterwards the scraws.

Whilst these successive processes went forward, many others had been engaged all the morning cutting rushes; and the scraws were no sooner laid on than half a dozen thatchers mounted the roof, and long before the evening was closed, a schoolhouse, capable of holding near a hundred children, was finished. But among the peasantry no new house is ever put up without a hearth-warming and a dance. Accordingly, the clay floor was paired—a fiddler procured—Barny Brady and his stock of *poteen* sent for; the young women of the village and surrounding neighbourhood attended in their best finery; dancing commenced; and it was four o'clock the next morning when the merrymakers departed, leaving Mat a new home and a hard floor, ready for the reception of his scholars.

Business now commenced. At nine o'clock the next day Mat's furniture was settled in a small cabin, given to him at

[1] It should be remembered that a "ditch" in Ireland signifies, not a gully or drain, but a high bank or wall dividing a field from the road.—ED.

a cheap rate by one of the neighbouring farmers; for whilst the schoolhouse was being built, two men, with horses and cars, had gone to Clansallagh, accompanied by Nancy, and removed the furniture, such as it was, to their new residence. Nor was Mat, upon the whole, displeased at what had happened. He was now fixed in a flourishing country, fertile and well cultivated; nay, the bright landscape which his schoolhouse commanded was sufficient in itself to reconcile him to his situation. The inhabitants were in comparatively good circumstances, many of them wealthy, respectable farmers, and capable of remunerating him very decently for his literary labours; and what was equally flattering, there was a certainty of his having a numerous and well-attended school, in a neighbourhood with whose inhabitants he was acquainted.

Honest, kind-hearted Paddy!—pity that you should ever feel distress or hunger!—pity that you should be compelled to seek in another land the hard-earned pittance by which you keep the humble cabin over the head of your chaste wife and naked children! Alas! what noble materials for composing a national character, of which humanity might be justly proud, do the lower orders of the Irish possess if raised and cultivated by a Christian education! Pardon me, gentle readers, for this momentary ebullition—I grant I am a little dark now. I assure you, however, the tear of enthusiastic admiration is warm on my eyelids when I remember the flitches of bacon, the sacks of potatoes, the bags of meal, the *miscawns* of butter, and the dishes of eggs—not omitting crate after crate of turf—which came in such rapid succession to Mat Kavanagh during the first week in which he opened his school. Ay, and many a bottle of stout *poteen*, when

"The eye of the gauger saw it not,"

was, with a sly, good-humoured wink, handed over to Mat or Nancy, no matter which, from under the comfortable drab jock, with velvet-covered collar, erect about the honest, ruddy face of a warm, smiling farmer, or even the tattered frieze of a poor labourer, anxious to secure the attention of the "masther" to his little *shoneen*, whom, in the extravagance

of his ambition, he destined to "wear the robes as a clargy." Let no man say, I repeat, that the Irish are not fond of education.

In the course of a month Mat's school was full to the door-posts; for, in fact, he had the parish to himself—many attending from a distance of three, four, and five miles. His merits, however, were believed to be great, and his character for learning stood high, though unjustly so, for a more superficial, and, at the same time, a more presuming dunce never existed; but his character alone could secure him a good attendance. He therefore belied the unfavourable prejudices against the Findramore folk which had gone abroad, and was a proof in his own person that the reason of the former schoolmasters' miscarriage lay in the belief of their incapacity which existed among the people. But Mat was one of those showy, shallow fellows who did not lack for assurance.

The first step a hedge schoolmaster took on establishing himself in a school was to write out, in his best copperplate hand, a flaming advertisement, detailing at full length the several branches he professed himself capable of teaching. I have seen many of these—as who that is acquainted with Ireland has not?—and beyond all doubt, if the persons that issued them were acquainted with the various heads recapitulated, they must have been buried in the most profound obscurity, as no man but a walking encyclopædia—an Admirable Crichton—could claim an intimacy with them, embracing, as they often did, the whole circle of human knowledge. 'Tis true, the vanity of the pedagogue had full scope in these advertisements, as there was none to bring him to an account, except some rival, who could only attack him on those practical subjects which were known to both. Independently of this, there was a good-natured collusion between them on those points which were beyond their knowledge, inasmuch as they were not practical but speculative, and by no means involved their character or personal interests. On the next Sunday, therefore, after Mat's establishment at Findramore, you might see a circle of the peasantry assembled at the chapel door, perusing, with suitable reverence and admiration on their faces, the following advertisement; or perhaps Mat himself, with a learned, consequential air, in the act of explaining it to them.

"*EDUCATION.*

"*Mr. Matthew Kavanagh, Philomath and Professor of the Learned Languages, begs leave to inform the Inhabitants of Findramore and its vircinity, that he Lectures on the following Branches of Education in his Seminary at the above-recited place :—*

"Spelling, Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, upon altogether *new* principles, hitherto undiscovered by any excepting himself, and for which he expects a Patent from Trinity College, Dublin; or, at any rate, from Squire Johnston, Esq., who paternizes many of the pupils: Book-keeping, by single and double entry—Geometry, Trigonometry, Stereometry, Mensuration, Navigation, Gauging, Surveying, Dialling, Astronomy, Astrology, Austerity, Fluxions, Geography, ancient and modern—Maps, the Projection of the *Spear*—Algebra, the use of the Globes, Natural and Moral Philosophy, Pneumatics, Optics, Dioptics, Catroptics, Hydraulics, Ærostatics, Geology, Glorification, Divinity, Mythology, Midicinality, Physic, by theory only, Metaphysics practically, Chemistry, Electricity, Galvanism, Mechanics, Antiquities, Agriculture, Ventilation, Explosion, &c.

"In Classics—Grammar, Cordery, Æsop's Fables, Erasmus' Colloquies, Cornelius Nepos, Phœdrus, Valerius Maximus, Justin, Ovid, Sallust, Virgil, Horace, Juvenal, Persius, Terence, Tully's Offices, Cicero, Manouverius Turgidus, Esculapius, Regerius, Satanus Nigrus, Quinctilian, Livy, Thomas Aquinas, Cornelius Agrippa, and Cholera Morbus.

"Greek Grammar, Greek Testament, Lucian, Homer, Sophocles, Eschylus, Thucydides, Aristophanes, Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, and the Works of Alexander the Great; the manners, habits, customs, usages, meditations of the Grecians; the Greek digamma resolved, Prosody, Composition, both in prose-verse and oratory, in English, Latin, and Greek; together with various other branches of learning and scholastic profundity—*quos enumerare longum est*—along with Irish Radically, and a small taste of Hebrew upon the Masoretic text.

"MATTHEW KAVANAGH, *Philomath.*"

Having posted this document upon the chapel door, and in all the public places and cross-roads of the parish, Mat considered himself as having done his duty. He now began to teach, and his school continued to increase to his heart's content, every day bringing him fresh scholars. In this manner he flourished till the beginning of winter, when those boys who, by the poverty of their parents, had been compelled to go to service to the neighbouring farmers, flocked to him in numbers, quite voracious for knowledge. An addition was consequently built to the schoolhouse, which was considerably too small; so that, as Christmas approached, it would be difficult to find a more numerous or merry establishment under the roof of a hedge school. But it is time to give an account of its interior.

The reader will, then, be pleased to picture to himself such a house as I have already described—in a line with the hedge; the eave of the back roof within a foot of the ground behind it; a large hole exactly in the middle of the "*riggin*," as a chimney; immediately under which is an excavation in the floor, burned away by a large fire of turf, loosely heaped together. This is surrounded by a circle of urchins, sitting on the bare earth, and exhibiting a series of speckled shins all radiating towards the fire, like sausages on a "Poloni" dish. There they are, wedged as close as they can sit—one with half a thigh off his breeches—another with half an arm off his tattered coat—a third without breeches at all, wearing as a substitute a piece of his mother's old petticoat, pinned about his loins—a fourth, no coat—a fifth with a cap on him, because he has got a scald, from having sat under the juice of fresh-hung bacon—a sixth with a black eye—a seventh with two rags about his heels to keep his kibes clean—an eighth crying to get home, because he has got a headache, though it may be as well to hint that there is a drag-hunt to start from beside his father's in the course of the day. In this ring, with his legs stretched in a most lordly manner, sits, upon a deal chair, Mat himself, with his hat on, basking in the enjoyment of unlimited authority. His dress consists of a black coat, considerably in want of repair, transferred to his shoulders through the means of a clothes-broker in the county town — a white cravat, round a large stuffing,

having that part which comes in contact with the chin somewhat streaked with brown—a black waistcoat with one or two "tooth-an'-egg" metal buttons sewed on where the original had fallen off—black corduroy inexpressibles, twice dyed, and sheep's-grey stockings. In his hand is a large broad ruler, the emblem of his power, the woful instrument of executive justice, and the signal of terror to all within his jurisdiction. In a corner below is a pile of turf, where, on entering, every boy throws his two sods with a pitch from under his left arm. He then comes up to the master, catches his forelock with finger and thumb, and bobs down his head, by way of making him a bow, and goes to his seat. Along the walls on the ground is a series of round stones, some of them capped with a straw collar or hassock, on which the boys sit; others have bosses, and many of them hobs—a light but compact kind of boggy substance found in the mountains. On these several of them sit; the greater number of them, however, have no seats whatever, but squat themselves down, without compunction, on the hard floor. Hung about, on wooden pegs driven into the walls, are the shapeless yellow *caubeens* of such as can boast the luxury of a hat, or caps made of goat or hare skin, the latter having the ears of the animal rising ludicrously over the temples, or cocked out at the sides, and the scut either before or behind, according to the taste or the humour of the wearer. The floor, which is only swept every Saturday, is strewed over with tops of quills, pens, pieces of broken slate, and tattered leaves of "Reading made Easy," or fragments of old copies. In one corner is a knot engaged at "fox-and-geese," or the "walls of Troy," on their slates; in another, a pair of them are "fighting bottles," which consists in striking the bottoms together, and he whose bottle breaks first of course loses. Behind the master is a third set, playing "heads and points"—a game of pins. Some are more industriously employed in writing their copies, which they perform seated on the ground, with their paper on a copy-board—a piece of planed deal the size of the copy, an appendage now nearly exploded—their cheek-bones laid within half an inch of the left side of the copy, and the eye set to guide the motion of the hand across, and to regulate the straightness of the lines and the forms of the

letters. Others, again, of the more grown boys, are working their sums with becoming industry. In a dark corner are a pairs of urchins thumping each other, their eyes steadily fixed on the master, lest he might happen to glance in that direction. Near the master himself are the larger boys, from twenty-two to fifteen—shaggy-headed slips, with loose-breasted shirts lying open about their bare chests; ragged colts, with white, dry, bristling beards upon them, that never knew a razor—strong stockings on their legs—heavy brogues, with broad, nail-paved soles, and breeches open at the knees. Nor is the establishment altogether without females; but these in hedge schools were too few in number to form a distinct class. They were, for the most part, the daughters of wealthy farmers, who considered it necessary to their respectability that they should not be altogether illiterate; such a circumstance being a considerable drawback, in the opinion of an admirer, from the character of a young woman for whom he was about to propose—a drawback, too, which was always weighty in proportion to her wealth or respectability.

Having given our readers an imperfect sketch of the interior of Mat's establishment, we will now proceed, however feebly, to represent him at work, with all the machinery of the system in full operation.

"Come, boys, rehearse—(buz, buz, buz)—I'll soon be after calling up the first spelling lesson—(buz, buz, buz)—then the mathematicians—book-keepers—Latinists and Grecians, successfully. (Buz, buz, buz.) Silence there below!—your pens. Tim Casey, isn't this a purty hour o' the day for you to come into school at; *arrah*, and what kept you, Tim? Walk up wid yourself here, till we have a confabulation together; you see I love to be talking to you."

"Sir, Larry Branagan, here—he's throwing spits at me out of his pen." (Buz, buz, buz.)

"By my sowl, Larry, there's a rod in steep for you."

"Fly away, Jack—fly away, Jill; come again, Jack——"

"I had to go to Paddy Nowlan's for tobaccy, sir, for my father"—weeping, with his hand knowingly across his face—one eye laughing at his comrades.

"You lie—it wasn't."

"If you call me a liar agin, I'll give you a dig in the mug."

"It's not in your jacket."

"Isn't it?"

"Behave yourself—ha! there's the masther looking at you —ye'll get it now."

"None at all, Tim? And she's not after sinding an excuse wid you? What's that undher your arm?"

"My Gough, sir." (Buz, buz, buz.)

"Silence, boys. And you blackguard Liliputian, you, what kept you away till this?"

"One bird pickin', two men thrashin'; one bird pickin', two men thrashin'; one bird pickin'——"

"Sir, they're stickin' pins in me here."

"Who is, Briney?"

"I don't know, sir; they're all at it."

"Boys, I'll go down to yous."

"I can't carry him, sir; he'd be too heavy for me. Let Larry Toole do it; he's stronger nor me—anyway, there he's putting a corker pin in his mouth."[1] (Buz, buz, buz.)

"Whoo-hoo-hoo-hoo! I'll never stay away agin, sir; indeed I won't, sir. Oh, sir dear, pardon me this wan time; and if ever you cotch me doing the like agin, I'll give you lave to welt the sowl out of me." (Buz, buz, buz.)

"Behave yourself, Barny Byrne."

"I'm not touching you."

"Yes, you are; didn't you make me blot my copy?"

"Ho, by the livin', I'll pay you goin' home for this."

"Hand me the taws."

"Whoo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo—what'll I do, at all, at all! Oh, sir dear, sir dear, sir dear—hoo-hoo-hoo!"

"Did she send no message, good or bad, before I lay on?"

"Oh, not a word, sir, only that my father killed a pig yestherday, and he wants you to go up to-day at dinner-time." (Buz, buz, buz.)

"It's time to get lave"—"It isn't"—"It is"—"It isn't"—"It is," &c.

"You lie, I say; your faction never was able to fight ours. Didn't we lick all your dirty breed in Buillagh-battha fair?"

[1] The scholars, to evade as much of the punishment as possible, used to stick a pin in the boy who carried them, which, leading to his leaping about, caused some of the blows to fail.—ED.

"Silence there."—(Buz, buz, buz.)

"Will you meet us on Sathurday, and we'll fight it out clane?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Tim, but you got a big fright, anyhow. Whist, *ma bouchal,* sure, I was only jokin' you; and sorry I'd be to bate your father's son, Tim. Come over and sit beside myself at the fire here. Get up, Micky Donoghue, you big burnt-shinned *spalpeen* you, and let the dacent boy sit at the fire."

"Hullabaloo hoo-hoo-hoo—to go to give me such a welt only for sitting at the fire and me brought turf wid me."

"To-day, Tim?"

"Yes, sir."

"At dinner-time, is id?"

"Yes, sir."

"Faith, the dacent strain was always in the same family." (Buz, buz, buz.)

"Horns, horns, cock horns—oh, you up'd wid them, you lifted your fingers—that's a mark, now—hould your face till I blacken you."

"Do you call thim two sods, Jack Lanigan? why, 'tis only one long one broke in the middle; but you must make it up to-morrow, Jack. How is your mother's tooth?—did she get it pulled out yet?"

"No, sir."

"Well, tell her to come to me, an' I'll write a charm for it that'll cure her.—What kept you till now, Paddy Magouran?"

"Couldn't come any sooner, sir?"

"You couldn't, sir; and why, sir, couldn't you come any sooner, sir?"

"See, sir, what Andy Nowlan done to my copy?"—(Buz, buz, buz.)

"Silence! I'll massacree yees if yees don't make less noise." (Buz, buz, buz.)

"I was down with Mrs. Kavanagh, sir."

"You were, Paddy—an' Paddy, *ma bouchal,* what war you doing there?"

"Masther, sir, spake to Jem Kenny here; he made my nose bleed."

"Eh, Paddy?"

"I was bringin' her a layin' hen, sir, that my mother promised her at mass on Sunday last."

"Ah, Paddy, you're a game bird yourself, wid your layin' hens; you're as full o' mischief as an egg's full o' mate—(*omnes*, ha, ha, ha, ha!) Silence, boys—what are you laughin' at?—ha, ha, ha! Paddy, can you spell Nebachodnazure for me?"

"No, sir."

"No, nor a better scholar, Paddy, could not do that, *ma bouchal;* but I'll spell it for you. Silence, boys—whist, all of yees, till I spell Nebachodnazure for Paddy Magouran. Listen; and you yourself, Paddy, are one of the letthers—

> 'A turf and a clod spells Nebachod—
> A knife and a razure spells Nebachodnazure—
> Three pair of boots and five pair of shoes
> Spells Nebachodnazure, the King of the Jews.'

Now, Paddy, that's spelling Nebachodnazure by the science of Ventilation; but you'll never go that deep, Paddy."

"I want to go out, if you plase, sir."

"Is that the way you ax me, you vagabone?"

"I want to go out, sir"—pulling down the forelock.

"Yes, that's something dacenter. By the sowl of Newton, that invinted fluxions, if ever you forget to make a bow again I'll flog the enthrils out of you. Wait till the pass comes in."

Then comes the spelling lesson.

"Come, boys, stand up to the spelling lesson."

"Micky, show me your book till I look at my word. I'm fifteenth."

"Wait till I see my own."

"Why do you crush for."

"That's my place."

"No, it's not."

"Sir, spake to——I'll tell the masther."

"What's the matther there?"

"Sir, he won't let me into my place."

"I'm before you."

"No, you're not."

"I say I am."

"You lie, pug-face. Ha! I called you pug-face; tell now, if you dare."

"Well, boys, down with your pins in the book—who's king?"

"I am, sir."

"Who's queen?"

"Me, sir."

"Who's prince?"

"I am prince, sir."

"Tagrag and bobtail, fall into your places."

"I've no pin, sir."

"Well, down with you to the tail—now, boys." [1]

Having gone through the spelling task, it was Mat's custom to give out six hard words, selected according to his judgment, as a final test; but he did not always confine himself to that; sometimes he would put a number of syllables arbitrarily together, forming a most heterogeneous combination of articulate sounds.

"Now, boys, here's a deep word, that'll thry yees—come, Larry, spell *me-mo-man-dran-san-ti-fi-can-du-ban-dan-ti-al-i-ty*, or *mis-an-thro-po-mor-phi-ta-ni-a-nus-mi-ca-li-a-tion*—that's too hard for you, is it? Well, then, spell phthisic. Oh, that's physic you're spellin'. Now, Larry, do you know the difference between physic and phthisic?"

"No, sir."

"Well, I'll expound it: phthisic, you see, manes—whist, boys; will yees hould yer tongues there—phthisic, Larry, signifies—that is, phthisic—mind, it's not physic I'm expounding—phthisic—boys, will yees stop yer noise there—signifies—but, Larry, it's so deep a word in larnin' that I should draw it out on a slate for you. And now I remimber, man alive, you're not far enough on yet to undherstand it. But what's physic, Larry?"

"Isn't that, sir, what my father tuck the day he got sick, sir?"

"That's the very thing, Larry: it has what larned men

[1] Each boy had to lay down a pin, and the one who answered best won most, and was king, the second was queen, and the third prince. The last was called "bobtail."

call a medical property, and resembles little rickety Dan Reilly there—it retrogrades. Och! och! I'm the boy that knows things—you see now how I expounded them two hard words for yees, boys—don't yees?"

"Yes, sir."

"So, Larry, you haven't the larnin' for that either; but here's an 'asier one—spell me Ephabridotas (Epaphroditas)—you can't!—hut! man, you're a big dunce entirely, that little *shoneen* Sharkey there below would sack. God be wid the day when I was the likes of you—it's I that was the bright *gorsoon* entirely; and so sign was on it, when a great larned traveller—silence, boys, till I tell yees this—(a dead silence)—from Trinity College, all the way in Dublin, happened to meet me one day, seeing the slate and Gough, you see, undher my arm, he axes me, '*Arrah*, Mat,' says he, 'what are you in?' says he. 'Faix, I'm in my waistcoat, for one thing,' says I, off-hand—silence, childher, and don't laugh so loud—(ha, ha, ha!) So he looks closer at me: 'I see that,' says he; 'but what are you reading?' 'Nothing at all, at all,' says I; 'bad manners to the taste, as you may see, if you've your eyesight.' 'I think,' says he, 'you'll be apt to die in your waiscoat;' and set spurs to a fine saddle-mare he rid—faith, he did so—thought me so 'cute—(*omnes:* ha, ha, ha!). Whisht, boys, whisht; isn't it a terrible thing that I can't tell yees a joke, but you split your sides laughing at it—(ha, ha, ha!). Don't laugh so loud, Barney Casey"—(ha, ha, ha!).

Barney: "I want to go out if you plase, sir."

"Go, *avick*—you'll be a good scholar yet, Barney. Faith, Barney knows whin to laugh, anyhow."

"Well, Larry, you can't spell Ephabridotas?—thin here's a short *weeshy* one, and whoever spells it will get the pins: spell a red rogue wid three letters. You, Micky? Dan? Jock? Natty? Alick? Andy? Pether? Jim? Tim? Pat? Rody? you? you? you? Now, boys, I'll hould ye my little Andy here, that's only beginning the "Rational Spelling Book," bates you all. Come here, Andy, *alanna*. Now, boys, if he bates you, you must all bring him a little *miscarn* of butter between two kale blades, in the mornin', for himself. Here, Andy, *avourneen*, spell red rogue wid three letthers."

Andy: "M a t—Mat."

"No, no, *avick*, that's myself, Andy; it's red rogue, Andy—hem!—F——"

"F o x—fox."

"That's a man, Andy. Now, boys, mind what you owe Andy in the mornin', plase God, won't yees?"

"Yes, sir." "Yes, sir." "Yes, sir." "I will, sir." "And I will, sir." "And so will I, sir," &c.

A hedge schoolmaster was the general scribe of the parish, to whom all who wanted letters or petitions written uniformly applied; and these were glorious opportunities for the pompous display of pedantry. The remuneration usually consisted of a bottle of whisky.

A poor woman, for instance, informs Mat that she wishes to have a letter written to her son, who is a soldier abroad.

"An' how long is he gone, ma'am?"

"Och, thin, masther, he's from me goin' an fifteen years; an' a comrade of his was spakin' to Jim Dwyer, an' says his ridgment's lyin' in the Island of Budanages,[1] somewhere in the back parts of Africa."

"An' is it a letther or petition you'd be afther havin' me to indite for you, ma'am?"

"Och, a letther, sir—a letther, masther; an' may the Lord grant you all kinds of luck, good, bad, an' indifferent, both to you an' yours; an' well it's known, by the same token, that it's yourself has the nice hand at the pen entirely, an' can indite a letther or pertition that the priest o' the parish mightn't be ashamed to own to it."

"Why, then, 'tis I that ud scorn to deteriorate upon the superiminence of my own execution at inditin' wid a pen in my hand; but would you feel a delectability in my superscriptionizin' the epistolary correspondency, ma'am, that I'm about to adopt?"

"Eagh? och, what am I sayin'!—sir—masther—sir?—the noise of the crathurs, you see, is got into my ears; and, besides, I'm a bit bothered on both sides of my head ever since I had that weary weed."

"Silence, boys—bad manners to yees, will ye be aisy, you

[1] "Bud-an-ages" is an Irish oath.—ED.

Liliputian Bœotians—by my s——hem—upon my credit, if I go down to that corner, I'll castigate yees in dozens; I can't spake to this dacent woman, with your insuperable turbulentiality."

"Ah, *avourneen*, masther, but the larnin's a fine thing, anyhow; an' maybe 'tis yourself that hasn't the tongue in your head, an' can spake the tall, high-flown English; *a-wurrah*, but your tongue hangs well, anyhow—the Lord increase it!"

"Lanty Cassidy, are you gettin' on wid yer Stereometry? *festina, mi discipuli; vocabo Homerum, mox atque mox.* You see, ma'am, I must tache thim to spake an' effectuate a translation of the larned languages sometimes."

"*Arrah*, masther dear, how did you get it all into your head, at all, at all?"

"Silence, boys—*tace*—'*conticuere omnes intentique ora tenebant.*' Silence, I say agin."

"You could slip over, maybe, to Doran's, masther, do you see? You'd do it betther there, I'll engage: sure, an' you'd want a dhrop to steady your hand, anyhow."

"Now, boys, I am goin' to indite a small taste of literal correspondency over at the public-house here. You *literati* will hear the lessons for me, boys, till afther I'm back agin; but mind, boys, *absente domino, serepuunt servi*—meditate on the philosophy of that; and, Mick Mahon, take your slate and put down all the names; and, upon my sou—hem—credit, I'll castigate any boy guilty of misty manners[1] on my retrogadation thither; *ergo momentote, cave ne titubes mandataque frangas.*"

"In throth, sir, I'd be long sarry to throuble you; but he's away fifteen years, and I wouldn't thrust it to another, and the corplar that commands the ridgment would regard your hand-write and your inditin'."

"Don't, ma'am, plade the smallest taste of apology."

"Eagh?"

"I'm happy that I can sarve you, ma'am."

"*Musha*, long life to you, masther, for that same, anyhow—but it's yourself that's deep in the larnin' and the langridges. The Lord increase yer knowledge—sure, an' we all want His blessin', you know."

[1] Misdemeanours.

THE RETURN

"Well, boys, ye've been at it—here's swelled faces and bloody noses. What blackened your eye, Callaghan? You're a purty prime ministher, ye boxing blackguard, you; I left you to keep pace among these factions, and you've kicked up a purty dust. What blackened your eye—egh?"

"I'll tell you, sir, whin I come in, if you plase."

"Ho, you vagabones, this is the ould work of the faction between the Bradys and the Callaghans—bastin' one another; but, by my sowl, I'll baste you all through other. You don't want to go out, Callaghan. You had fine work here since; there's a dead silence now; but I'll pay you presently. Here, Duggan, go out wid Callaghan, an' see that you bring him back in less than no time. It's not enough for your fathers and brothers to be at it, who have a right to fight, but you must battle betune you—have your field days itself!"

(Duggan returns)—"Hoo—hoo—sir, my nose. Oh, murdher *sheery*, my nose is broked!"

"Blow your nose, you *spalpeen*, you—where's Callaghan?"

"Oh, sir, bad luck to him every day he rises out of his bed; he got a stone in his fist, too, that he hot me a pelt on the nose wid, and then made off home."

"Home, is id? Start, boys, off—chase him, lie into him—asy, curse yees, take time gettin' out—that's it—keep to him—don't wait for me—take care, you little *spalpeens*, or you'll brake your bones, so you will—blow the dust off this road, I can't see my way in it!"

"Oh! murdher, Jem, *agra*, my knee's out of joint."

"My elbow's smashed, Paddy. Bad luck to him—the divil fly away wid him—oh! ha! ha!—oh! ha! ha! murdher—hard fortune to me, but little Mickey Geery fell, an' thripped the masther, an' himself's disabled now—his black breeches split too—look at him feelin' them—oh! oh! ha! ha!—by tare-an-ounty, Callaghan will be murdhered if they cotch him."

This was a specimen of civilisation which Ireland only could furnish—nothing, indeed, could be more perfectly ludicrous than such a chase; and such scenes were by no means uncommon in hedge schools; for wherever severe punishment

was dreaded—and, in truth, most of the hedge-masters were unfeeling tyrants—the boy, if sufficiently grown to make a good race, usually broke away, and fled home at the top of his speed. The pack then were usually led on by the master, who mostly headed them himself, all in full cry, exhibiting such a scene as should be witnessed in order to be enjoyed. The neighbours, men, women, and children, ran out to be spectators; the labourers suspended their work to enjoy it, assembling on such eminences as commanded a full view of the pursuit.

"Bravo, boys—success, masther—lie into him—where's your huntin'-horn, Mr. Kavanagh—he'll bate yees if ye don't take the wind of him. Well done, Callaghan; keep up your heart, your sowl, and you'll do it asy—yer gaining on them, *ma bouchal*—the masther's down, you gallows clip, an' there's none but the scholars afther ye—he's safe."

"Not he; I'll hould a naggin, the poor scholar has him—don't you see he's close at his heels."

"Done, by my song—they'll never come up wid him—listen to their leather crackers and cord-a-roys, as their knees bang agin one another. Hark forrit, boys! hark forrit! hurroo, you thieves, hurroo!"

"Yer beagles is well winded, Mr. Kavanagh, an' gives good tongue."

"Well, masther, you had your chase for nothin', I see."

"Mr. Kavanagh," another would observe, "I didn't think you war so stiff in the hams as to let the *gorsoon* bate you that a-way—your wind's failin', sir."

"The schoolmaster was abroad" then, and never was the "march of intellect" at once so rapid and unsuccessful.

During the summer season it was the usual practice for the scholars to transfer their paper, slates, and books to the green which lay immediately behind the schoolhouse, where they stretched themselves on the grass and resumed their business. Mat would bring out his chair, and placing it on the shady side of the hedge, sit with his pipe in his mouth, the contented lord of his little realm, whilst nearly a hundred and fifty scholars of all sorts and sizes lay scattered over the grass, basking under the scorching sun in all the luxury of novelty, nakedness, and freedom. The sight was original and charac-

teristic, and such as Mr. Brougham [1] would have been delighted with—"the schoolmaster was abroad again."

As soon as one o'clock drew near, Mat would pull out his ring-dial,[2] holding it against the sun, and declare the hour.

"Now, boys, to yer dinners, and the rest to play."

"Hurroo! darlins, to play—the masther says it's dinner-time!—whip-spur-an'-away-grey—hurroo—whack—hurroo!"

"Masther, sir, my father bid me ax you home to yer dinner."

"No; he'll come to huz—Come wid me, if you plase, sir."

"Sir, never heed them; my mother, sir, has some of what you know—of the flitch I brought to Shoneen on last Aisther, sir."

This was a subject on which the boys gave themselves great liberty, an invitation, even when not accepted, being an indemnity for the day; it was usually followed by a battle between the claimants, and bloody noses were the issue. The master himself, after deciding to go where he was certain of getting the best dinner, generally put an end to the quarrels by a reprimand, and then gave notice to the disappointed claimants of the successive days on which he would attend at their respective houses.

"Boys, you all know my maxim: to go, for fear of any jealousies, boys, wherever I get the worst dinner; so tell me now, boys, what yer dacent mothers have all got at home for me?"

"My mother killed a fat hen yesterday, sir, an' you'll have a lump of bacon and 'flat dutch' along wid it."

"We'll have hung beef and greens, sir."

"We tried the praties this mornin', sir, an' we'll have new praties, and bread and butther, sir."

"Well, it's all good, boys; but rather than show favour or affection, do you see, I'll go wid Andy, here, and take share

[1] Mr. Brougham—afterwards Lord Brougham—who had invented the phrase "the schoolmaster is abroad" in one of his speeches on education.—ED.

[2] The substitute for a watch used by the people. It was a bright brass ring, about three-quarters of an inch broad, and two and a half inches in diameter. The sun was admitted through a small hole against the inside of the ring behind, on which was marked the hours and quarters.

of the hen an' bacon; but, boys, for all that, I'm fonder of the other things, you persave; and as I can't go wid you, Mat, tell your respectable mother that I'll be wid her to-morrow; and with you, Larry, *ma bouchal*, the day afther."

If a master were a single man, he usually "went round" with the scholars each night; but there were generally a few comfortable farmers, leading men in the parish, at whose house he chiefly resided, and the children of these men were treated with the grossest and most barefaced partiality. They were altogether privileged persons, and had liberty to beat and abuse the other children of the school, who were certain of being most unmercifully flogged if they even dared to prefer a complaint against the favourites. Indeed, the instances of atrocious cruelty in hedge schools were almost incredible, and such as in the present enlightened time would not be permitted. As to the state of the "poor scholar," it exceeded belief; for he was friendless and unprotected. But though legal prosecutions in those days were never resorted to, yet, according to the characteristic notions of Irish retributive justice, certain cases occurred in which a signal, and, at times, a fatal vengeance was executed on the person of the brutal master. Sometimes the brothers and other relatives of the mutilated child would come in a body to the school, and flog the pedagogue with his own taws until his back was lapped in blood. Sometimes they would beat him until few symptoms of life remained. Occasionally he would get a nocturnal notice to quit the parish in a given time, under a penalty which seldom proved a dead letter in case of non-compliance. Not unfrequently did those whom he had, when boys, treated with such barbarity go back to him, when young men, not so much for education's sake, as for the especial purpose of retaliating upon him for his former cruelty. When cases of this nature occurred, he found himself a mere cipher in his school, never daring to practise excessive severity in their presence. Instances have come to our own knowledge of masters who, for their mere amusement, would go out to the next hedge, cut a large branch of furze or thorn, and having first carefully arranged the children in a row round the walls of the school, their naked legs stretched out before them, would

sweep round the branch, bristling with spikes and prickles, with all their force against their limbs, until, in a few minutes, a circle of blood was visible on the ground where they sat, their legs appearing as if they had been scarified. This the master did whenever he happened to be drunk or in a remarkably good humour. The poor children, however, were obliged to laugh loud, and enjoy it, though the tears were falling down their cheeks in consequence of the pain he inflicted. To knock down a child with the fist was considered nothing harsh; nor if a boy were cut or prostrated by a blow of a cudgel on the head, did he ever think of representing the master's cruelty to his parents. Kicking on the shins with the point of a *brogue* or shoe, bound round the edge of the sole with iron nails, until the bone was laid open, was a common punishment; and as for the usual slapping, horsing, and flogging, they were inflicted with a brutality that in every case richly deserved for the tyrant, not only a peculiar whipping by the hand of the common executioner, but a separation from civilised society by transportation for life. It is a fact, however, that in consequence of the general severity practised in hedge schools, excesses of punishment did not often produce retaliation against the master; these were only exceptions, isolated cases that did not affect the general character of the discipline in such schools.

The reading matter placed in their hands was of a most inflammatory and pernicious nature as regarded politics; and as far as religion and morality were concerned, nothing could be more gross and superstitious than the books which circulated among them. Eulogiums on murder, robbery, and theft were read with delight in the histories of Freney the Robber, and the Irish Rogues and Rapparees;[1] ridicule of the Word of God, and hatred to the Protestant religion, in a book called "Ward's Cantos,"[2] written in Hudibrastic verse; the downfall of the Protestant Establishment, and the exaltation of the Romish Church, in Columbkill's Prophecy, and latterly in that of Pastorini; the "Lives of the Saints," of St. Patrick, of St. Columbkill, of St. Teresa, St. Francis

[1] These are well-known Irish chap-books.—ED.

[2] Written by one Thomas Ward, an Englishman, who flourished in the seventeenth century.—ED.

Xavier; the Holy Scapular, and several other works. Political and religious ballads of the vilest doggerel, miraculous legends of holy friars persecuted by Protestants, and of signal vengeance inflicted by the divine power on their persecutors, were in the mouths of the young and old, and, of course, firmly fixed in their credulity.

Their weapons of controversy were drawn from the "Fifty Reasons," the "Doleful Fall of Andrew Sall," the "Catholic Christian," the "Grounds of the Catholic Doctrine," a "Net for the Fishers of Men," and several other publications of the same class. The books of amusement read in these schools, including the first-mentioned in this list, were the "Seven Champions of Christendom," the "Seven Wise Masters and Mistresses of Rome," "Don Belianis of Greece," the "Royal Fairy Tales," the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments," "Valentine and Orson," "Gesta Romanorum," "Dorastus and Faunia," the "History of Reynard the Fox," and the "Chevalier Faublas." To these I may add the "Battle of Aughrim," "Siege of Londonderry," "History of the Young Ascanius" (a name by which the Pretender was designated), the "Renowned History of the Siege of Troy"; the "Forty Thieves," "Robin Hood's Garland," the "Garden of Love and Royal Flower of Fidelity," "Parimus and Parismenus";[1] along with others, the names of which shall not appear in these pages.

"Thady Bradly, will you come up wid your slate till I examine you in your figures? Go out, sir, and blow your nose first, and don't be after making a looking-glass out of the sleeve of your jacket. Now that Thady's out, I'll hould you, boys, that none of yees know how to expound his name —eh? do yees? But I needn't ax—well, 'tis Thadeus; and maybe that's as much as the priest that christened him knew. Boys, you see what it is to have the larnin'—to lade the life of a gintleman, and to be able to talk deeply wid the clargy. Now, I could run down any man in arguin', except a priest; and if the bishop was afther consecratin' me, I'd have more larnin' than the most of them; but you see I'm

[1] Some of these are chap-books, and well known—the others are very rarely met with in Ireland.—ED.

not consecrated—and—well, 'tis no matther—I only say that the more's the pity.

"Well, Thady, when did you go into subtraction?"

"The day beyond yesterday, sir; *yarrá musha*, sure, 'twas yourself, sir, that shet me the first sum."

"Masther, sir, Thady Bradly stole my cutter—That's my cutter, Thady Bradly."

"No it's not," in a low voice.

"Sir, that's my cutter—an' there's three nicks in id."

"Thady, is that his cutter?"

"There's your cutter for you. Sir, I found it on the flure, and didn't know who owned it."

"You know'd very well who owned it; didn't Dick Martin see you liftin' it off o' my slate when I was out?"

"Well, if Dick Martin saw him it's enough; an' 'tis Dick that's the tindher-hearted boy, an' would knock you down wid a lump of a stone if he saw you murtherin' but a fly!

"Well, Thady—throth, Thady, I fear you'll undherstand subtraction better nor your tacher; I doubt you'll apply it to 'Practice' all your life, *ma bouchal*, and that you'll be apt to find it 'the Rule of False'[1] at last. Well, Thady, from one thousand pounds, no shillings and no pince, how will you subtract one pound? Put it down on your slate—this way—

1000 00 00
1 00 00"

"I don't know how to shet about it, masther."

"You don't? an' how dare you tell me so, you *shingawn*, you—you Cornelius Agrippa, you. Go to your sate and study it, or I'll—ha! be off, you——

"Pierce Mahon, come up wid your multiplication. Pierce, multiply four hundred by two—put it down—that's it—

400
By 2."

"Twice nought is one." (Whack, whack.) "Take that as an illustration—is that one?"

[1] The name of a rule in Gough's "Arithmetic."

"Faith, masther, that's two, anyhow; but, sir, is not wanst nought nothin'? Now, masther, sure there can't be less than nothin'."

"Very good, sir."

"If wanst nought be nothin', then twice nought must be somethin', for it's double what wanst nought is—see how I'm sthruck for nothin', an me knows it—hoo! hoo! hoo!"

"Get out, you Esculapian; bud I'll give you somethin' by-and-by, just to make you remimber that you know nothin'—off wid you to your sate, you *spalpeen*, you—to tell me that there can't be less than nothin', when it's well known that sporting Squire O'Canter is worth a thousand pounds less than nothin'.

"Paddy Doran, come up to your 'Intherest.' Well, Paddy, what's the intherest of a hundred pound at five per cent.? Boys, have manners, you thieves, you."

"Do you mane, masther, per cent. per annum?"

"To be sure I do—how do you state it!"

"I'll say, as a hundher pound is to one year, so is five per cent. per annum."

"Hum—why—what's the number of the sum, Paddy?"

"'Tis No. 84." (The masther steals a glance at the Key to Gough.)

"I only want to look at it in the Gough, you see, Paddy—an' how dare you give me such an answer, you big-headed dunce, you—go off an' study it, you rascally Liliputian—off wid you, and don't let me see your ugly mug till you know it.

"Now, gintlemen, for the Classics; and first for the Latinaarians—Larry Cassidy, come up wid your Asop. Larry, you're a year at Latin, an' I don't think you know Latin for frieze, what your own coat is made of, Larry. But, in the first place, Larry, do you know what a man that taches Classics is called?"

"A schoolmasther, sir." (Whack, whack, whack.)

"Take that for your ignorance—and that to the back of it—ha! that'll tache you—to call a man that taches Classics a schoolmasther, indeed! 'Tis a Profissor of Humanity itself he is—(whack, whack, whack). Ha! you ringleader, you, you're as bad as Dick O'Connell, that no masther in the county could get any good of, in regard that he put the

whole school together by the ears, wherever he'll be, though the *spalpeen* wouldn't stand fight himself. Hard fortune to you! to go to put such an affront upon me, an' me a Profissor of Humanity. What's Latin for pantaloons?"

"Fem—fem—femi."

"No, it's not, sir."

"*Femora*——"

"Can you do it?"

"Don't strike me, sir—don't strike me, sir, an' I will."

"I say, can you do it?"

"*Femorali*—(whack, whack, whack)—ah, sir! ah, sir! 'tis *femorali*—ah, sir! 'tis *femorali*—ah, sir!"

"This thratement to a Profissor of Humanity." (Drives him head over heels to his seat.) "Now, sir, maybe you'll have Latin for throwsers agin, or, by my sowl, if you don't, you must peel, and I'll tache you what a Profissor of Humanity is!

"Dan Shiel, you little starved-looking *spalpeen,* will you come up to your illocution?—and a purty figure you cut at it, wid a voice like a penny thrumpet, Dan! Well, what speech have you got now, Dan, *ma bouchal?* Is it 'Romans, counthrymin, and lovers'?"

"No, shir; *yarrah,* didn't I spake that speech before? 'Tis wan, masther, that I'm afther pennen myself!"

"No, you didn't, you fairy—ah, Dan, little as you are, you take credit for more than ever you spoke, Dan, *agra;* but faith, the same thrick will come agin you some time or other, *avick!* Go and get that speech betther; I see by your face you haven't it—off wid you, and get a patch upon your breeches; your little knees are through them, though 'tisn't by prayin' you've wore them, anyhow, you little hop-o'-my-thumb, you, wid a voice like a rat in a thrap; and yet you'll be practisin' illocution—off wid you, man alive! You little spitfire, you, if you and your schoolfellow Dick O'Connell had been wid the Jews whin they wanted to burn down the standin' corn of the Philistins, the divil a fox they might bother their heads about, for yees both would have carried firebrands by the hundher for them. Spake the next speech betther—between you and Dick, you keep the school in perpetual agitation."

Sometimes the neighbouring gentry used to call into Mat's establishment, moved probably by a curiosity excited by his character and the general conduct of the school. On one occasion Squire Johnston and an English gentleman paid him rather an unexpected visit. Mat had that morning got a new scholar, the son of a dancing tailor in the neighbourhood; and as it was reported that the son was nearly equal to the father in that accomplishment, Mat insisted on having a specimen of his skill. He was the more anxious on this point, as it would contribute to the amusement of a travelling schoolmaster, who had paid him rather a hostile visit, which Mat, who dreaded a literary challenge, feared might occasion him some trouble.

"Come up here, you little *sartor*, till we get a dacent view of you. You're a son of Ned Malone's—aren't you?"

"Yes, and of Mary Malone, my mother, too, sir."

"Why thin, that's not bad, anyhow. What's your name?"

"Dick, sir."

"Now, Dick, *ma bouchal*, isn't it true that you can dance a hornpipe?"

"Yes, sir."

"Here, Larry Brady, take the door off the hinges, an' lay it down on the flure, till Dick Malone dances "The Humours of Glin. Silence, boys, not a word; but just keep lookin' an."

"Who'll sing, sir? for I can't be afther dancin' a step widout the music."

"Boys, which of yees 'ill sing for Dick? I say, boys, will none of yees give Dick the harmony? Well, come, Dick, I'll sing for you myself:—

Torral lol, lorral lol, lorral lol, lorral lol—
Toldherol, lorral lol, lorral lol, lal," &c. &c.

"I say, Misther Kavanagh," said the strange master, "what angle does Dick's heel form in the second step of the treble, from the kibe on the left foot to the corner of the door forninst him?"

To this mathematical poser Mat made no reply, only sang the tune with redoubled loudness and strength, whilst little Dicky pounded the old crazy door with all his skill and alacrity. The "boys" were delighted.

"Bravo, Dick, that's a man—welt the flure—cut the buckle—murdher the clocks—rise upon *suggaun*, and sink upon gad—down the flure flat, foot about—keep one foot on the ground, and t'other never off it," saluted him from all parts of the house.

Sometimes he would receive a sly hint, in a feigned voice, to call for "Devil stick the Fiddler," alluding to the master. Now a squeaking voice would chime in; by-and-by another, and so on, until the master's bass had a hundred and forty trebles, all in chorus, to the same tune.

Just at this moment the two gentlemen entered; and, reader, you may conceive, but I cannot describe, the face which Mat (who sat with his back to the door, and did not see them until they were some time in the house) exhibited on the occasion. There he sung *ore rotundo*, throwing forth an astounding tide of voice; whilst little Dick, a thin, pale-faced urchin, with his head, from which the hair stood erect, sunk between his hollow shoulders, was performing prodigious feats of agility.

"What's the matter? what's the matter?" said the gentlemen. "Good morning, Mr. Kavanagh!"

"——Torral lol, lol——

Oh, good—oh, good morning—gintlemen, with extreme kindness," replied Mat, rising suddenly up, but not removing his hat, although the gentlemen instantly uncovered.

"Why, thin, gintlemen," he continued, "you have caught us in our little relaxations to-day; but—hem!—I mane to give the boys a holiday for the sake of this honest and respectable gintleman in the frieze jock, who is not entirely ignorant, you persave, of litherature; and we had a small taste, gintlemen, among ourselves, of Sathurnalian licentiousness, *ut ita dicam*, in regard of—hem!—in regard of this lad here, who was dancing a hornpipe upon the door, and we, in absence of betther music, had to supply him with the harmony; but, as your honours know, gintlemen, the greatest men have bent themselves on espacial occasions."

"Make no apology, Mr. Kavanagh; it's very commendable in you to *bend* yourself by condescending to amuse your pupils."

"I beg your pardon, Squire, I can take freedoms with you; but perhaps the concomitant gintleman, your friend here, would be pleased to take my stool. Indeed, I always use a chair; but the back of it, if I may be permitted the use of a small portion of jocularity, was as frail as the fair sect—it went home yisterday to be minded. Do, sir, condescind to be sated. Upon my reputation, Squire, I'm sorry that I have not accommodation for you too, sir! except one of these hassocks, which, in joint considheration with the length of your honour's legs, would be, I anticipate, rather low. But you, sir, will honour me by taking the stool."

By considerable importunity he forced the gentleman to comply with his courtesy; but no sooner had he fixed himself upon the seat than it overturned, and stretched him, black coat and all, across a wide concavity in the floor, nearly filled up with white ashes produced from mountain turf. In a moment he was completely white on one side, and exhibited a most laughable appearance; his hat, too, was scorched and nearly burned on the turf coals. Squire Johnston laughed heartily, as did the other schoolmaster; whilst the Englishman completely lost his temper—swearing that so uncivilised an establishment was not between the poles.

"I solemnly supplicate upwards of fifty pardons," said Mat. "Bad manners to it for a stool! but, your honour, it was my own defect of speculation, bekase, you see, it's *minus* a leg—a circumstance of which you warn't in a proper capacity to take cognation, as not being personally acquainted with it. I humbly supplicate upwards of fifty pardons."

The Englishman was now nettled, and determined to wreak his ill temper on Mat by turning him and his establishment into ridicule.

"Isn't this Mister —— ?—I forget your name, sir."

"Mat Kavanagh, at your sarvice."

"Very well, my learned friend, Mr. Mat Kavanagh; isn't this precisely what is called a hedge school?"

"A hedge school!" replied Mat, highly offended—"my siminary a hedge school! No, sir; I scorn the *cognomen, in toto*. This, sir, is a Classical and Mathematical Siminary, under the personal superintendence of your humble servant."

"Sir," replied the other master, who till then was silent,

wishing, perhaps, to sack Mat in presence of the gentlemen, "it is a hedge school; and he is no scholar, but an ignoramus, whom I'd sack in three minutes, that would be ashamed of a hedge school."

"Ay," says Mat, changing his tone, and taking the cue from his friend, whose learning he dreaded, "it's just, for argument's sake, a hedge school; and, what is more, I scorn to be ashamed of it."

"And do you not teach occasionally under the hedge behind the house here?"

"Granted," replied Mat; "and now, where's your *vis consequentiæ?*"

"Yes," subjoined the other, "produce your *vis consequentiæ.*"

The Englishman himself was rather at a loss for the *vis consequentiæ*, and replied, "Why don't you live, and learn, and teach like civilised beings, and not assemble like wild asses —pardon me, my friend, for the simile—at least, like wild colts, in such clusters behind the ditches?"

"A clusther of wild coults!" said Mat—"that shows what you are; no man of classical larnin' would use such a word."

"Permit me, sir," replied the strange master, "to ax your honour one question—Did you receive a classical education? —are you college-bred?"

"Yes," replied the Englishman; "I can reply to both in the affirmative. I'm a Cantabrigian."

"You're what?" asked Mat.

"I am a Cantabrigian."

"Come, sir, you must explain yourself, if you plase. I'll take my oath that's neither a classical nor a mathematical tarm."

The gentleman smiled. "I was educated in the English College of Cambridge."

"Well," says Mat, "and maybe you would be as well off if you had picked up your larnin' in our own Thrinity; there's good picking in Thrinity for gintlemen like you, that are sober and harmless about the brains, in regard of not being overly bright."

"You talk with contempt of a hedge school," replied the

other master. "Did you never hear, for all so long as you war in Cambridge, of a nate little spot in Greece called the Groves of Academus?

'Inter lucos Academi, quærere verum.'

What was Plato himself but a hedge schoolmaster? and, with humble submission, it casts no slur on an Irish tacher to be compared to him, I think. You forget also, sir, that the Dhruids taught under their oaks."

"Ay," added Mat, "and the Tree of Knowledge, too. Faith, an' if that same tree was now in being, if there wouldn't be hedge schoolmasters, there would be plinty of hedge scholars, anyhow—particularly if the fruit was well tasted."

"I believe, Millbank, you must give in," said Squire Johnston. "I think you have got the worst of it."

"Why," said Mat, "if the gintleman's not afther bein' sacked clane, I'm not here."

"Are you a mathematician?" inquired Mat's friend, determined to follow up his victory; "do you know mensuration?"

"Come, I do know mensuration," said the Englishman, with confidence.

"And how would you find the solid contents of a load of thorns?" said the other.

"Ay, or how will you consther and parse me this sintince?" said Mat:—

'Regibus et clotibus solemus stopere windous
Nos numerus sumus fruges consumere nati,
Stercora flat stire rara terra-tantaro bungo.'"

"Aisy, Mister Kavanagh," replied the other; "let the Cantabrigian resolve the one I propounded him first."

"And let the Cantabrigian then take up mine," said Mat; "and if he can expound it, I'll give him a dozen more to bring home in his pocket, for the Cambridge folk to crack after their dinner along wid their nuts."

"Can you do the 'Snail'?" inquired the stranger.

"Or 'A and B on opposite sides of a wood,' without the Key?" said Mat.

"Maybe," said the stranger, who threw off the frieze jock

and exhibited a muscular frame of great power, cased in an old black coat—"maybe the gintleman would like to get a small taste of the 'Scuffle.'"

"Not at all," replied the Englishman; "devil the least curiosity I have for it—I assure you I have not. What the deuce do they mean, Johnston? I hope you have influence over them."

"Hand me down that cudgel, Jack Brady, till I show the gintleman the 'Snail' and the 'May-pole,'" said Mat.

"Never mind, my lad — never mind, Mr.— a — Mr. Kavanagh. I give up the contest, I resign you the palm, gentlemen. The hedge school has beaten Cambridge hollow."

"One poser more before you go, sir," said Mat. "Can you give Latin for a game-egg in two words?"

"Eh, a game-egg? No, by my honour I cannot—gentlemen, I yield."

"Ay, I thought so," replied Mat. "Bring it home to Cambridge, anyhow, and let them chew their cuds upon it, you persave; and, by the sowl of Newton, it will puzzle the whole establishment, or my name's not Kavanagh."

"It will, I am convinced," replied the gentleman, eyeing the herculean frame of the strange teacher, and the substantial cudgel in Mat's hand—"it will, undoubtedly. But who is this most miserable naked lad here, Mr. Kavanagh?"

"Why, sir," replied Mat, with his broad Milesian face expanding with a forthcoming joke, "he is, sir, in a sartin and especial particularity, a namesake of your own."

"How is that, Mr. Kevanagh?"

"My name's not *K*evanagh," replied Mat, "but *K*avanagh —the Irish A for ever!"

"Well, but how is the lad a namesake of mine?" said the Englishman.

"Bekase, you see, he's a poor scholar, sir," replied Mat—"an' I hope your honour will pardon me for the facetiousness—

'Quid vetat ridentem dicere verum?'

as Horace says to Mæcenas, in the first of the Sathirs."

"There, Mr. Kavanagh, is the price of a suit of clothes for him."

"Michael, will you rise up, sir, and make the gintleman a bow? he has given you the price of a shoot of clothes, *ma bouchal.*"

Michael came up with a thousand rags dangling about him; and catching his forelock, bobbed down his head after the usual manner, saying, "*Musha, yarra*, long life to your honour every day you rise, an' the Lord grant your sowl a short stay in purgatory, wishin' ye, at the same time, a happy death aftherwards!"

The gentlemen could not stand this, but laughed so heartily that the argument was fairly knocked up.

It appeared, however, that Squire Johnston did not visit Mat's school from mere curiosity.

"Mr. Kavanagh," said he, "I would be glad to have a little private conversation with you, and will thank you to walk down the road a little with this gentleman and me."

When the gentlemen and Mat had gone ten or fifteen yards from the school door, the Englishman heard himself congratulated in the following phrases:—

"How do you feel afther bein' sacked, gintleman? The masther sacked you! You're a purty scholar! It's not you, Mr. Johnston, it's the other. You'll come to argue agin, will you? Where's your head now? Bah! Come back till we put the *suggaun* [1] about your neck. Bah! You must go to school to Cam-bridge agin before you can argue an Irisher! Look at the figure he cuts! Why duv ye put the one foot past the other, when ye walk, for? Bah! Dunce!"

"Well, boys, never heed yees for that," shouted Mat—"never fear but I'll castigate yees, ye *spalpeen* villains, as soon as I go back. Sir," said Mat, "I supplicate upwards of fifty pardons. I assure you, sir, I'll give them a most inordinate castigation for their want of respectability."

"What's the Greek for tobaccy?" they continued, "or for Larry O'Toole? or for bletherum skite? How many beans make five? What's Latin for *poteen* and flummery? You a mathemathitician! Could you measure a snail's horn? How does your hat stay up and nothing under it? Will you

[1] The *suggaun* was a collar of straw which was put round the necks of the dunces, who were then placed at the door, that their disgrace might be as public as possible.

fight Barny Farrell wid one hand tied? I'd lick you myself! What's Greek for *gosther?*" with many other expressions of a similar stamp.

"Sir," said Mat, "lave the justice of this in my hands. By the sowl of Newton, your own counthryman, ould Isaac, I'll flog the marrow out of them."

"You have heard, Mr. Kavanagh," continued Mr. Johnston, as they went along, "of the burning of Moore's stables and horses the night before last. The fact is that the magistrates of the county are endeavouring to get the incendiaries, and would render a service to any person capable, either directly or indirectly, of facilitating that object, or stumbling on a clue to the transaction."

"And how could I do you a sarvice in it, sir?" inquired Mat.

"Why," replied Mr. Johnston, "from the children. If you could sift them in an indirect way, so as, without suspicion, to ascertain the absence of a brother or so on that particular night, I might have it in my power to serve you, Mr. Kavanagh. There will be a large reward offered to-morrow, besides."

"Oh, damn the penny of the reward ever I'd finger, even if I knew the whole conflagration," said Mat; "but lave the siftin' of the children wid myself, and if I can get anything out of them you'll hear from me; but your honour must keep a close mouth, or you might have occasion to lend me the money for my own funeral some o' these days. Good morning, gintlemen."

The gentlemen then departed.

"May the most ornamental kind of hard fortune pursue you every day you rise, you desavin' villain, that would have me turn informer, bekase your brother-in-law, rack-rintin' Moore's stable and horses were burnt; but I'd see you and all your breed in the flames o' hell first." Such was Mat's soliloquy as he entered the school on his return.

"Now, boys, I'm afther giving yees to-day and to-morrow for a holiday. To-morrow we will have our Gregory [1]—a fine faste, plinty of *poteen,* and a fiddle; and you will tell your brothers and sisters to come in the evening to the dance.

[1] The feast of St. Gregory.

You must bring plinty of bacon, hung beef, and fowls, bread and cabbage—not forgetting the phaties, and sixpence a head for the crathur, boys, won't yees?"

The next day, of course, was one of festivity. Every boy brought, in fact, as much as would serve six; but the surplus gave Mat some good dinners for three months to come. The pupils were at liberty for that day to conduct themselves as they pleased; and the consequence was that they became generally intoxicated, and were brought home in that state to their parents. If the children of two opposite parties chanced to be at the same school, they usually had a fight, of which the master was compelled to feign ignorance; for if he identified himself with either faction, his residence in the neighbourhood would be short. In other districts where Protestant schools were in existence, a battle-royal commonly took place between the opposite establishments, in some field lying half-way between them. This has often occurred.

Every one must necessarily be acquainted with the ceremony of "barring out." This took place at Easter and Christmas. The master was brought or sent out on some fool's errand, the door shut and barricaded, and the pedagogue excluded until a certain term of vacation was extorted. With this, however, the master never complied until all his efforts at forcing an entrance were found to be ineffectual; because if he succeeded in getting in, they not only had no claim to a long vacation, but were liable to be corrected. The schoolmaster had also, generally, the clerkship of the parish; an office, however, which, in the country parts of Ireland, is without any kind of salary beyond what results from the patronage of the priest—a matter of serious moment to a teacher, who, should he incur his reverence's displeasure, would be immediately driven out of the parish. The master therefore was always tyrannical and insolent to the people in proportion as he stood high in the estimation of the priest. He was also the master of ceremonies at all wakes and funerals, and usually sat among a crowd of the village sages, engaged in exhibiting his own learning, and in recounting the number of his religious and literary disputations.

One day soon after the visit of the gentlemen above men-

tioned, two strange men came into Mat's establishment—rather, as Mat thought, in an unceremonious manner.

"Is your name Matthew Kavanagh?" said one of them.

"That is indeed the name that's upon me," said Mat, with rather an infirm voice, whilst his face got pale as ashes.

"Well," said the fellow, "we'll jist trouble you to walk with us a bit."

"How far, with submission, are yees goin' to bring me?" said Mat.

"Do you know Johnny Short's hotel?"[1]

"My curse upon you, Findramore," exclaimed Mat, in a paroxysm of anguish, "every day you rise! but your breath's unlucky to a schoolmasther; and it's no lie what was often said, that no schoolmasther ever thruv in you, but something ill came over him."

"Don't curse the town, man alive," said the constable, "but curse your own ignorance and folly; anyway, I wouldn't stand in your coat for the wealth of the three kingdoms. You'll undoubtedly swing, unless you turn king's evidence. It's about Moore's business, Mr. Kavanagh."

"Dang the *that* I'd do, even if I knew anything about it; but, God be praised for it, I can set them all at defiance—that I'm sure of. Gintlemen, innocence is a jewel."

"But Barny Brady, that keeps the *shebeen*-house—you know him—is of another opinion. You and some of the Findramore boys took a sup in Barny's on a sartin night?"

"Ay, did we, on many a night, and will agin, plase Providence. No harm in taking a sup, anyhow—by the same token that maybe you and yer friend here would have a drop of rale stuff, as a thrate from me?"

"I know a thrick worth two of that," said the man; "I thank ye kindly, Mr. Kavanagh."

One Tuesday morning, about six weeks after this event, the largest crowd ever remembered in that neighbourhood was assembled at Findramore Hill, whereon had been erected a certain wooden machine, yclept a gallows. A little after

[1] The county gaol of Monaghan, the governor of which (see "Phelim O'Toole's Courtships") was named Johnny Short.—ED.

the hour of eleven o'clock two carts were descried winding slowly down a slope on the southern side of the town and church, which I have already mentioned as terminating the view along the level road north of the hill. As soon as they were observed, a low, suppressed ejaculation of horror ran through the crowd, painfully perceptible to the ear, in the expression of ten thousand murmurs all blending into one deep groan—and to the eye, by a simultaneous motion that ran through the crowd like an electric shock. The place of execution was surrounded by a strong detachment of military; and the carts that conveyed the convicts were also strongly guarded.

As the prisoners approached the fatal spot, which was within sight of the place where the outrage had been perpetrated, the shrieks and lamentations of their relations and acquaintances were appalling indeed. Fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, cousins, and all persons to the most remote degree of kindred and acquaintanceship, were present—all excited by the alternate expression of grief and low-breathed vows of retaliation; not only relations, but all who were connected with them by the bonds of their desperate and illegal oaths. Every eye, in fact, coruscated with a wild and savage fire, that shot from under brows knit in a spirit that seemed to cry out blood, vengeance—blood, vengeance. The expression was truly awful, and what rendered it more terrific was the writhing reflection that numbers and physical force were unavailing against a comparatively small body of armed troops. This condensed the fiery impulse of the moment into an expression of subdued rage, that really shot like livid gleams from their visages.

At length the carts stopped under the gallows; and after a short interval spent in devotional exercise, three of the culprits ascended the platform, who, after recommending themselves to God, and avowing their innocence, although the clearest possible evidence of guilt had been brought against them, were launched into another life, among the shrieks and groans of the multitude. The other three then ascended. Two of them either declined or had not strength to address the assembly. The third advanced to the edge of the boards —it was Mat. After two or three efforts to speak, in which

he was unsuccessful from bodily weakness, he at length addressed them as follows :—

"My friends and good people—In hopes that you may be all able to demonstrate the last proposition laid down by a dying man, I undertake to address you before I depart to that world where Euclid, De Carts, and many other larned men are gone before me. There is nothing in all philosophy more true than that, as the multiplication table says, 'two and two makes four;' but it is equally veracious and worthy of credit that if you do not abnegate this system that you work the common rules of your proceedings by—if you don't become loyal men, and give up burnin' and murdherin', the solution of it will be found on the gallows. I acknowledge myself to be guilty, for not separatin' myself clane from yees. We have been all guilty, and may God forgive thim that jist now departed wid a lie in their mouth."

Here he was interrupted by a volley of execrations and curses, mingled with "stag," "informer," "thraithor to the thrue cause!" which, for some time, compelled him to be silent.

"You may curse," continued Mat; "but it's too late now to abscond the truth—the 'sum' of my wickedness and folly is worked out, and you see the 'answer.' God forgive me—many a young crathur I enticed into the Ribbon business, and now it's to ind in hemp! Obey the law; or if you don't, you'll find it a *lex talionis*—the construction of which is that if a man burns or murdhers, he won't miss hanging. Take warning by me—by us all; for although I take God to witness that I was not at the perpetration of the crime that I'm to be suspinded for, yet I often connived, when I might have superseded the carrying of such intintions into effectuality. I die in pace wid all the world, save an' except the Findramore people, whom may the maledictionary execration of a dying man follow into eternal infinity! My manuscription of conic sections——" Here an extraordinary buzz commenced among the crowd, which rose gradually into a shout of wild, astounding exultation. The sheriff followed the eyes of the multitude, and perceived a horseman dashing with breathless fury up towards the scene of execution. He carried and waved a white handkerchief on the end of a rod,

and made signals with his hat to stop the execution. He arrived, and brought a full pardon for Mat, and a commutation of sentence to transportation for life for the other two. What became of Mat I know not; but in Findramore he never dared to appear, as certain death would have been the consequence of his not dying game. With respect to Barny Brady, who kept the *shebeen*, and was the principal evidence against those who were concerned in this outrage, he was compelled to enact an *extempore* death in less than a month afterwards; having been found dead, with a slip of paper in his mouth, inscribed, "This is the fate of all informers."

THE LOUGH DERG PILGRIM

I WAS, at the time of performing this station in the middle of my nineteenth year—of quick perception—warm imagination—a mind peculiarly romantic—a morbid turn for devotion—and a candidate for the priesthood, having been made slightly acquainted with Latin, and more slightly still with Greek. At this period, however, all my faculties merged like friendly streams into the large current of my devotion. Of religion I was completely ignorant, although I had sustained a very conspicuous part in the devotions of the family, and signalised myself frequently by taking the lead in a rosary. I had often out-prayed and out-fasted an old circulating pilgrim, who occasionally visited our family—a feat on which few would have ventured; and I even arrived to such a pitch of perfection at praying, that, with the assistance of young and powerful lungs, I was fully able to distance him at any English prayer in which we joined. But in Latin, I must allow, that owing to my imperfect knowledge of its pronunciation, and to some twitches of conscience I felt on adventuring to imitate him by overleaping this impediment, he was able to throw me back a considerable distance in his turn; so that when we both started for a *De profundis,* I was always sure to come in second. Owing to all this I was considered a young man of promise, being, moreover, as my master often told my father, a youth of prodigious parts and great 'cuteness. Indeed, on this subject my master's veracity could not be questioned, because when I first commenced Latin I was often heard repeating the prescribed tasks in my sleep. Many of my relations had already, even upon the strength of my prospective priesthood, begun to claim relationship with our family, and before I was nineteen I found myself godfather to a dozen godsons and as many god-daughters; every one of whom I had with unusual condescension taken under my patronage; and most of the boys were

named after myself. Finding that I was thus responsible for so much in the opinion of my friends, and having the aforesaid character of piety to sustain, I found it indispensable to make the pilgrimage. Not that I considered myself a sinner, or by any means bound to go from *that* motive; for although the opinion of my friends as to my talents and sanctity was exceedingly high, yet, I assure you, it cut but a very indifferent figure when compared with my own on both these subjects.

I very well remember that the first sly attempt I ever made at a miracle was in reference to Lough Derg; I tried it by way of preparation for my pilgrimage. I heard that there had been a boat lost there, about the year 1796, and that a certain priest who was in her as a passenger, had walked very calmly across the lake to the island, after the boat and the rest of the passengers in her had all gone to the bottom. Now, I had, from my childhood, a particular prejudice against sailing in a boat, although Dick Darcy, a satirical and heathenish old bachelor, who never went to mass, used often to tell me, with a grin which I was never able rightly to understand, that I might have no prejudice against sailing, "because," Dick would say, "take my word for it, you'll never die by drowning." At all events, I thought to myself, that should any such untoward accident occur to me, it would be no unpleasant circumstance to imitate the priest; but that it would be infinitely more agreeable to make the first experiment in a marl-pit, on my father's farm, than on the lake. Accordingly, after three days' fasting and praying for the power of not sinking in the water, I slipped very quietly down to the pit, and after reconnoitring the premises, to be sure there was no looker-on, I approached the brink. At this moment my heart beat high with emotion, my soul was wrapt up to a most enthusiastic pitch of faith, and my whole spirit absorbed in feelings, where hope, doubt, gleams of uncertainty, visions of future eminence, twitches of fear, reflections on my expertness in swimming, on the success of the water-walking priest aforementioned, and on the depth of the pond, had all insisted on an equal share of attention. At the edge of the pit grew large water-lilies, with their leaves spread over the surface.

It is singular to reflect upon what slight and ridiculous circumstances the mind will seize when wound up in this manner to a pitch of superstitious absurdity. I am really ashamed, even whilst writing this, of the confidence I put for a moment in a treacherous water-lily, as its leaf lay spread so smoothly and broadly over the surface of the pond, as if to lure my foot to the experiment. However, after having stimulated myself by a fresh *Pater* and *Ave*, I advanced, my eyes turned up enthusiastically to heaven, my hands resolutely clenched, my teeth locked together, my nerves set, and my whole soul strong in confidence—I advanced, I say; and lest I might give myself time to cool from this divine glow, I made a tremendous stride, planting my right foot exactly in the middle of the treacherous water-lily leaf, and the next moment was up to the neck in water. Here was devotion cooled. Happily I was able to bottom the pool, or could swim very well if necessary; so I had not much difficulty in getting out. As soon as I found myself on the bank, I waited not to make reflections, but with a rueful face set off at full speed for my father's house, which was not far distant; the water all the while whizzing out of my clothes, by the rapidity of the motion, as it does from a water-spaniel after having been in that element. It is singular to think what a strong authority vanity has over the principles and passions in the weakest and strongest moments of both: I never was remarkable, at that open, ingenuous period of my life, for secrecy; yet did I now take especial care not to invest either this attempt at the miraculous, or its concomitant failure, with anything like narration. It was, however, an act of devotion that had a vile effect on my lungs, for it gave me a cough that was intolerable; and I never felt the infirmities of humanity more than in this ludicrous attempt to get beyond them; in which, by the way, I was nearer being successful than I had intended, though in a different sense. This happened a month before I started for Lough Derg.

It was about six o'clock of a delightful morning in the pleasant month of July when I set out upon my pilgrimage, with a single change of linen in my pocket, and a pair of discarded shoes upon my bare feet; for, in compliance with

the general rule, I wore no stockings. The sun looked down upon all nature with great good-humour; everything smiled around me; and as I passed for a few miles across an upland country which stretched down from a chain of dark rugged mountains that lay westward, I could not help feeling—although the feeling was indeed checked—that the scene was exhilarating. The rough upland was in several places diversified with green spots of cultivated land, with some wood, consisting of an old, venerable plantation of mountain pine, that hung on the convex sweep of a large knoll away to my right—with a broad sheet of lake that curled to the fresh arrowy breeze of morning, on which a variety of water-fowl were flapping their wings or skimming along, leaving a troubled track on the peaceful waters behind them; there were also deep intersections of precipitous or sloping glens, graced with hazel, holly, and every description of copse-wood. On other occasions I have drunk deeply of pleasure when in the midst of this scenery, bearing about me the young, free, and bounding spirit, its first edge of enjoyment unblunted by the collision of base minds and stony hearts, against which experience jostles us in maturer life.

The dew hung shining upon the leaves, and fell in pattering showers from the trees, as a bird, alarmed at my approach, would spring from the branch and leave it vibrating in the air behind her. The early challenge of the cock grouse, and the *quick-go-quick* of the quail, were cheerfully uttered on all sides. The rapid martins twittered with peculiar glee, or, in the light caprice of their mirth, placed themselves for a moment upon the edge of a scaur, or earthy precipice, in which their nests were built, and then shot off again to mingle with the careering and joyful flock that cut the air in every direction. Where is the heart which could not enjoy such a morning scene? Under any other circumstances it would have enchanted me; but here, in fact, that intensity of spirit which is necessary to the due contemplation of beautiful prospects was transferred to a gloomier object. I was under the influence of a feeling quite new to me. It was not pleasure, nor was it pain, but a chilliness of soul which proceeded from the gloomy and severe task that I had

undertaken—a task which, when I considered the danger and the advantages annexed to its performance, was sufficient to abstract me from every other object. It was really the first exercise of that jealous spirit of mistaken devotion, which keeps the soul in perpetual sickness, and invests the innocent enjoyments of life with a character of sin and severity. It was this gloomy feeling that could alone have strangled in their birth those sensations which the wisdom of God has given as a security in some degree against sin, by opening to the heart of man sources of pleasure for which the soul is not compelled to barter away her innocence, as in those of a grosser nature. I may be wrong in analysing the sensation, but for the first time in my life I felt anxious and unhappy; yet, according to my own opinions, I should have been otherwise. I was startled at what I experienced, and began to consider it as a secret intimation that I had chosen a wrong time for my journey. I even felt as if it would not prosper—as if some accident or misfortune would befall me ere my return. The boat might sink, as in 1796 [1]—this was quite alarming. The miraculous experiment on the pond here occurred to me with full force, and came before my imagination in a new point of view. The drenching I got had a deep and fearful meaning. It was ominous—it was prophetic—and sent by a merciful Providence to deter me from attempting the pilgrimage at this peculiar time, perhaps on this particular day: to-morrow the spell might be broken, the danger past, and the difference of a single day could be nothing. Just at this moment an unlucky hare, starting from an adjoining thicket, scudded across my path, as if to fill up the measure of these ominous predictions. I paused, and my foot was on the very turn to the right-about, when instantly a thought struck me which produced a reaction in my imagination. Might not all this be the temptation of the devil suggested to prevent me from performing this blessed work? Might not the hare itself be some——? In short, the counter-current carried me with it. I had commenced my journey, and every one knows that when a man commences a journey it is unlucky to turn back. On

[1] It was in 1795 this accident occurred.—Ed.

I went, but still with a subdued and melancholy tone of feeling. If I met a cheerful countryman, his mirth found no kindred spirit in me: on the contrary, my taciturnity seemed to infect him; for after several ineffectual attempts at conversation, he gradually became silent, or hummed a tune to himself, and, on parting, bade me a short, doubtful kind of good day, looking over his shoulder, as he departed, with a face of scrutiny and surprise.

After getting five or six miles across the country, I came out on one of those by-roads which run, independently of all advantages of locality, "up hill and down dale," from one little obscure village to another. These roads are generally paved with round broad stones, laid curiously together in longitudinal rows like the buttons on a schoolboy's jacket. Owing to the infrequency of travellers on them, they are quite overgrown with grass, except in one stripe along the middle, which is kept naked by the hoofs of horses and the tread of foot-passengers.

At last I came out upon the main road; and you will be pleased to imagine to yourself the figure of a tall, gaunt, gawkish young man, dressed in a good suit of black cloth, with shirt and cravat like snow, striding solemnly along, without shoe or stocking; for about this time I was twelve miles from home, and blisters had already risen upon my feet, in consequence of the dew having got into my shoes, which at the best were enough to cut up any man; I had therefore to strip, and carry my shoes—one in my pocket, and another stuffed in my hat—being thus with great reluctance compelled to travel barefoot. Yet I soon turned even this to account, when I reflected that it would enhance the merit of my pilgrimage, and that every fresh blister would bring down a fresh blessing. 'Tis true I was nettled to the soul on perceiving the face of a labourer on the way-side, or of a traveller who met me, gradually expanding into a broad sarcastic grin as such an unaccountable figure passed him. But these I soon began to suspect were Protestant grins; for none but heretics would presume by any means to give me a sneer. The Catholics, taking me for a priest, were sure to doff their hats to me; or if they wore none, as is not unfrequent when at labour, they would catch their forelocks with their finger

and thumb, and bob down their heads in the act of veneration. This attention of my brethren more than compensated for the mirth of all other sects; in fact, their mistaking me for a priest began to give me a good opinion of myself, and perfectly reconciled me to the fatiguing severity of the journey.

I have had occasion to remark while upon this pilgrimage, or rather long afterwards—for I was but little versed then in the science of reflection—that it is impossible to calculate upon the capabilities of either body or mind until they are drawn out by some occasion of peculiar interest in which those of either or both are thrown upon their own energies and resources. In my opinion the great secret or the directing principle of all enterprise rests in the motive of action; for whenever a suitable interest can be given to the principles of human conduct, the person bound by and feeling that interest will not only perform as much as could possibly be expected from his natural powers, but he will recruit his energies by drawing in all the adventitious aid which the various relations of that interest, as they extend to other objects, are capable of affording him. It was amazing, for instance, to observe the vigour and perseverance with which feeble, sickly old creatures performed the necessary austerities of this dreadful pilgrimage—creatures who, if put to the same fatigue on any other business, would at once sink under it; but the motive supplied energy, and the infirmities of nature borrowed new strength from the deep and ardent devotion of the spirit.

The first that I suspected to be fellow-pilgrims were two women whom I overtook upon the way. They were dressed in grey cloaks, striped red-and-blue petticoats; drugget, or linsey-woolsey gowns, that came within about three inches of their ankles. Each had a small white bag slung at her back, which contained the scanty provisions for the journey, and the oaten cakes, crisp and hard-baked, for the pilgrimage to the lake. The hoods of their cloaks fell down their backs; and each dame had a spotted cotton kerchief pinned round her *dowd* cap at the chin, whilst the remainder of it fell down the shoulders, over the cloaks. Each had also a staff in her hand, which she held in a manner peculiar to a travelling woman—that is, with her hand round the upper end of it, her right thumb extended across its head, and her arm, from

the elbow down, parallel with the horizon. The form of each, owing to the want of that spinal strength and vigour which characterise the erect gait of man, was bent a little forward; and this, joined to the idea produced by the nature of their journey, gave to them something of an ardent and devoted character, such as the mind and eye would seek for in a pilgrim. I saw them at some distance before me, and knew by the staves and white bags behind them that they were bound for Lough Derg. I accordingly stretched out a little that I might overtake them; for in consequence of the absorbing nature of my own reflections, my journey had only been a solitary one, and I felt that society would relieve me. I was not a little surprised, however, on finding that as soon as I topped one height of the road, I was sure to find my two old ladies a competent distance before me in the hollow (most of the northern roads are of this nature), and that when I got to the bottom, I was as sure to perceive their heads topping the next hill, and then gradually sinking out of my sight. I was surprised at this, and perhaps a little nettled that a fresh, active young fellow should not have sufficient mettle readily to overtake two women. I *did* stretch out, therefore, with some vigour; yet it was not till after a chase of two miles or so that I found myself abreast of them.

As soon as they noticed me they dropped a curtsey each, addressing me at the same time as a clergyman, and I returned their salutation with all due gravity. Upon my inquiring how far they had travelled that day, it appeared that they had actually performed a journey seven miles longer than mine. "We needn't ax your reverence if you're for the Islan'?" said one of them. "I am," I replied, not caring to undeceive her as to my reverentiality.

The truth was, in the midst of all my sanctity I felt proud of the old woman's mistake as to my priesthood, and really had not so much ready virtue about me on the occasion as was sufficient to undeceive her. I was even thankful to her for the inquiry, and thought, on a closer inspection, I perceived an uncommon portion of good sense and intelligence in her face. "My very excellent, worthy woman," said I, "how is it that you are able to travel at such a rate, when one would suppose you should be fatigued by this time, after

so long a journey?" "*Musha!*" said she, "but your reverence ought to know that." I felt puzzled at this. "How should I know it?" said I. "I'm sure," she continued, "you couldn't expect a poor ould crathur o' sixty to travel at this rate, at all, at all, except for raisons, your reverence"—looking towards me quite confidently and knowingly. This was still more oracular, and I felt very odd under it; my character for devotion was at stake, and I feared that the old lady was drawing me into a kind of vicious circle. "Your reverence knows, that for the likes o' me, that can hardly move to the market of a Sathurday, Lord help me! an' home agin, for to travel at this rate, would be unpossible, anyhow, except," she added, "for what I'm carryin', sir, blessed be God for it!"—peering at me again with a more knowing and triumphant look. "Why, that's true," said I thoughtfully; and then assuming a bit of the sacerdotal privilege, and suddenly raising my voice, although I was as innocent as the child unborn of her meaning—"that's true; but now, as you appear to be a sensible, pious woman, I hope you understand the nature of what you are carrying—and in a proper manner, too, for you know that's the chief point." "Why, Father dear, I do my best, *avourneen;* an' I ought of a sartinty to know it, bekase blessed Friar Hagan spent three days instructin' Mat and myself in it; an' more betoken, that Mat sent him a sack o' phaties an' a bag of oats for his trouble—not forgettin' the goose he got from myself the Micklemas afther.—*Arrah,* how long is that ago, Katty *ahagur?*" said she, addressing her companion. "Ten years," said Katty. "Oh! it's more, I'm thinkin'; it's ten years since poor Dick, God rest his sowl, died, and this was full two years afore that—but no matther, *agra,* I'll let your reverence hear the prayer, at any rate." She here repeated a beautiful Irish prayer to the Blessed Virgin, of which that beginning with "Hail, holy Queen!" in the Roman Catholic prayer-books is a translation, or perhaps the original. While she was repeating the prayer, I observed her hand in her bosom, apparently extricating something, which, on being brought out, proved to be a scapular.[1] She held it up, that I might see it. "Your

[1] A religious emblem which has been blessed. Many Irish people wear the scapular, and have great faith in it as a shield from harm.—ED.

reverence," said she, "this is the ninth journey of the kind I made; but you don't wonder now, I bleeve, how stoutly I'm able to stump it."

"You really do stump it stoutly, as you say," I replied.

"Ay," said she, "an' not a wan' o' me but's as weak as a cat—at home scarce can put a hand to anything; but then, your reverence, my eldest daughter, Ellish, jist minds the house, an' lets the ould mother mind the prayers, as I'm not able to do a hand's turn worth namin'."

"But you appear to be stout and healthy," I observed, "if a person may judge by your looks."

"Glory be to them that giv it to me, then! that I am at the present time, *padre deelish.* But don't you know I'm always so durin' this journey. I've a wicked heartburn that torments the very life out o' me all the year round till this; and what ud your reverence think, but it's sure to lave me, clear and clane, and a fortnight or so afore I come here; I never wanst feels a bit iv it while I rouse and prepare myself for the Island, nor for a month after I come here agen, glory be to God!" She then turned to her companion, and commenced, in a voice half audible—"*Musha!* Katty *ahagur,* did ye iver lay your two livin' eyes on so young a priest? A sweet and holy crathur he is, no doubt, and has goodness in his face—may the Lord bless him!"

"*Musha!*" said she, "surely your reverence can't be long afther bein' ordained, I'm thinkin'?" "Well, that's very strange," said I, evading her—"so you tell me your heartburn leaves you, and that you get stout every year about the time of your pilgrimage?" "An' troth an' I do!—hut! what am I sayin'? Indeed, sir, maybe that's more than I can say, either, your reverence; but for sartin it is." "Do you mean that you do or that you do not?" I inquired. "Indeed, your reverence, you jist hot it—the Lord bless you, and spare you to the parents that reared ye—an' proud people may they be at having the likes of 'im, Katty *avourneen*"—turning abruptly to Katty, that she might disarm my interrogatories on this tender subject with a better grace,—"proud people, as I said afore, the Lord may spare him to them!" We here topped a little hill, and saw the spire of a steeple, and the skirts of a country

town, which a passenger told us was about three miles distant.

My feet by this time were absolutely in *griskins ;*[1] nor was I by any means prepared for a most unexpected proposal which the spokeswoman, after some private conversation with the other, undertook to make. I could not imagine what the purport of the dialogue was ; but I easily saw that I myself was the subject of it, for I could perceive them glance at me occasionally, as if they felt a degree of hesitation in laying down the matter for my approval. At length she opened it with great adroitness : "*Musha,* an' to be sure he will, Katty dear an' darlin'—and mightn't you know he would—the refusin' to do it isn't in his face, as anybody that has eyes to see may know—you ashamed ! —and what for would ye be ashamed ?—*asthore,* it's 'imself that's not proud, or he wouldn't tramp it, barefooted, along wud two ould crathurs like huz—him that has no sin to answer for—but I'll spake to 'im myself, and ye'll see it's he that won't refuse it. Why, thin, your reverence, Katty an' I war thinkin', that as there's only three of us, an' the town's afore us, where we'll rest a while, plase God—for by that time the shower that's away over there will be comin' down —that as there's but three of us, would it be any harm if we sed a bit of a rosary, and your reverence to join us ?"

This was, indeed, a most unexpected attack ; but it was evident that I was set down by this curious woman as a paragon of piety ; though, indeed, her object was rather to smooth the way in my mind for what she intended should be a very excellent opinion of her own godliness.

I looked about me, and as far as my eye could reach, the road appeared solitary. I did, 'tis true, debate the matter with myself, *pro* and *con,* for I felt the absurdity of my situation and of this abrupt proposal more than I was willing to suppose I did. Still, thought I, it is a serious thing to refuse praying with this poor woman because she is poor—God is no respecter of persons—this, too, is a rosary to the Blessed Virgin ; besides, nothing can be too humbling for a person when once engaged in this holy station. "So, pride,

[1] That, is blistered and raw, but see Glossary for the word *griskin.*—ED.

I trample you under my feet!" said I to myself, at a moment when the appearance of a respectable person on the road would have routed all my humility. I complied, however, with a very condescending grace, and to it we went. The old women pulled out their beads, and I got my hat, which had one of my shoes in it, under my arm. They requested that I would open the rosary, which I did; and thus we kept tossing the ball of prayer from one to another along the way, whilst I was bending and sinking on the hard gravel in perfect agony.

But we had not gone far when the shower, which we did not suppose would have fallen until we should reach the town, began to descend with greater bounty than we were at all prepared for—or than I was, at least, for I had no outside coat; but, indeed, the morning was so beautiful that rain was scarcely to be apprehended. With respect to the old lady, she appeared to be better acquainted with the necessary preparations for such a journey than I had been; for as soon as the shower became heavy (and it fell very heavily), she whipped off her cloak, and before I could say a syllable to the contrary, had it pinned about me. She then drew out of a large four-cornered pocket of red cloth that hung at her side, a hare's skin cap, which, in a twinkling, was on her own cranium. But what was most singular, considering the heat of the weather, was the appearance of an excellent frieze jacket, such as porters and draymen usually wear, with two outside pockets on the sides, into one of which she drove her arm up to the elbow, and in the other hand carried her staff like a man—I thought she wore the cap, too, a little to the one side on her head. Indeed, a more ludicrous appearance could scarcely be conceived than she now exhibited. I, on the other hand, cut an original figure: being six feet high, with a short grey cloak pinned tightly about me, my black cassimere small-clothes peeping below it; my long, yellow, polar legs, unencumbered with calves, quite naked; a good hat over the cloak, but no shoes on my feet—marching thus gravely upon my pilgrimage, with two such figures!

In this singular costume did we advance, the rain all the time falling in torrents. The town, however, was not far distant, and we arrived at a little thatched house, where

"dry lodgin'" was offered above the door, both to "man and baste;" and never did an unfortunate group stand more in need of *dry* lodging, for we were wet to the skin. On entering the town, we met a carriage, in which were a gentleman and two ladies. I chanced to be walking a little before the women, but could perceive, by casting a glance into the carriage, that they were in convulsions with laughter; to which I have strong misgivings of having contributed in no ordinary degree. But I felt more indignant at the wit, forsooth, of the well-fed serving-man beaind the coach, who should also have his joke upon us; for as we passed, he turned to my companion, whom he addressed as a male personage—"And why, you old villain, do you drive your cub to the 'Island' pinioned in such a manner—give him the use of his arms, you sinner!"—thus intimating that I was a booby son of hers in leading-strings. The old lady looked at him with a very peculiar expression of countenance; I thought she smiled, but never did a smile appear to me so pregnant with bitterness and cursing scorn. "Ay," said she, "there goes the well-fed heretic, that neither fasts nor prays—his God is his belly—they have the fat of the land for the present, your reverence, but wait a bit. In the manetime, we had betther get in here a little, till this shower passes—you see the sun's beginnin' to brighten behind the rain, so it can't last long; and a bit of breakfast will do none of us any harm." We then entered the house aforesaid, which presented a miserable prospect for refreshment; but as I was in some measure identified with my fellow-travellers, I could not with a good grace give them up. I had not at the time the least experience of the world—was incapable of that discrimination which guides some people, as it were, by instinct in choosing their society—and had altogether but a poor notion of the more refined decorum of life. When we got in, the equivocal lady began to exercise some portion of authority. "Come," said she, "here's a clargyman, and you had betther lose no time in gettin' his reverence his breakfast." Then said the civil creature to the mistress, in the same kind of half-audible tone—"*Avourneen,* if you have anything comfortable, get it for him; he is generous, an' will pay you well for it—a blessed

crathur he is, too, as ever brought good luck under your roof. Lord love you, if ye hard him discoursin' uz along the road, as if he was one of ourselves, so mild and sweet! I'm sure I ll always have a good opinion of myself for puttin' on the jacket this bout, at any rate, as I was able to spare his reverence the cloak, *ahagur!* the mild crathur!"

While my fellow-traveller was thus talking, I had time to observe that the woman of the house was a cleanly-looking creature, with something of a sickly appearance. An old grey-headed man sat in something between a chair and a stool, formed of one solid piece of ash, supported by three legs sloping outwards; the seat of it was quite smooth by long use, and a circular row of rungs, capped by a piece of semi-circular wood, shaped to receive the reclining body of whoever might occupy it, rose from the seat in presumptuous imitation of an arm-chair. There were two other chairs besides this, but the remainder of the seats were all stools. The room was square, with a bed in each of the corners adjoining the fire, covered with blue drugget quilts, stoutly quilted. There was another room in which travellers slept. Opposite me on the wall was the appropriate picture of St. Patrick himself, with his crosier in hand, driving all kinds of venomous reptiles out of the kingdom. The "Hermit of Killarney" was on his right, and the "Yarmouth Tragedy," or the "dolorious" history of Jemmy and Nancy, two unfortunate lovers, on his left. Such is the rigorous economy of a pilgrimage, and such the circumstances of the greater part of those who undertake it, that it is to houses of this description the generality of them resort. These "dry lodging" houses may not improperly be called Pilgrims' Inns, a great number of them being opened only during the continuance of the three months in which the stations are performed.

Breakfast was now got ready; but it was evident that my two companions had not been taken into account, for there was an "equipage" only for one. I inquired from my speaking partner if she and her fellow-traveller would not breakfast. The only reply I received was a sorrowful shake of the head, and "Och, no, plase your reverence, no!" in quite an exhausted cadence. On hearing this, the kind landlady gave them a look of uncommon pity, exclaiming

at the same time, as if in communication with her own feelings, "*Musha*, God pity them, the poor crathurs; an' they surely can't but be both wake an' hungry afther sich a journey this blessed an' broilin' day—och! och! if I had it or could afford it, an' they shouldn't want, anyway. *Arrah*, won't ye thry and ate a bit of something?" addressing herself to them. "Och, then, no, *alanna;* but I'd jist thank ye for a dhrink of cowld wather, if ye plase; an' that may be the strengthenin' of us a bit." I saw at once that their own little stock of provisions, if they really had any, was too scanty to allow the simple creatures the indulgence of a regular meal; still I thought they might, if they felt so very weak, have taken even a slight refreshment from their bags. However, I was bound in honour, and also in charity, to give them their breakfast, which I ordered accordingly for them both, it being, I considered, only fair that as we had prayed together we should eat together. Whilst we were at breakfast, the landlady, with a piece of foresight for which I afterwards thanked her, warmed a pot of water, in which my feet were bathed. She then took out a large three-cornered pin-cushion with tassels, which hung at her side, a darning-needle, and having threaded it, she drew a white woollen thread several times along a piece of soap, pressing it down with her thumb until it was quite soapy; this she drew very tenderly through the blisters which were risen on my feet, cutting it at both ends, and leaving a part of it in the blister. It is decidedly the best remedy that ever was tried, for I can declare that during the remainder of my pilgrimage not one of these blisters gave me the least pain.

When breakfast was over, and these kind attentions performed, we set out once more; and from this place, I remarked as we advanced, that an odd traveller would fall in upon the way; so that before we had gone many miles farther, the fatigue of the journey was much lessened by the society of the pilgrims. These were now collected into little groups, of from three to a dozen each, with the exception of myself and one or two others of a decenter cast, having the staff and bag. The chat and anecdotes were, upon the whole, very amusing; but although there was a great variety of feature, character, and costume among so many, as must

always be the case where people of different lives, habits, and pursuits are brought together, still I could perceive that there was a shade of strange ruminating abstraction apparent on all. I could observe the cheerful narrator relapse into a temporary gloom, or a fit of desultory reflection, as some train of thought would suddenly rise in his mind. I could sometimes perceive a shade of pain, perhaps of anguish, darken the countenance of another, as if a bitter recollection was awakened; yet this often changed, by an unexpected transition, to a gleam of joy and satisfaction, as if a quick sense or hope of relief flashed across his heart.

When we came near Petigo, the field for observation was much enlarged. The road was then literally alive with pilgrims, and reminded me, as far as numbers were concerned, of the multitudes that flock to market on a fair-day. Petigo is a snug little town, three or four miles from the lake where the pilgrims all sleep on the night before the commencement of their stations. When we were about five or six miles from it, the road presented a singular variety of grouping. There were men and women of all ages, from the sprouting devotee of twelve to the hoary, tottering pilgrim of eighty, creeping along, bent over his staff, to perform this soul-saving work and die.

Such is the reverence in which this celebrated place is held, that as we drew near it I remarked the conversation to become slack; every face put on an appearance of solemnity and thoughtfulness, and no man was inclined to relish the conversation of his neighbour or to speak himself. The very women were silent. Even the lassitude of the journey was unfelt, and the unfledged pilgrim, as he looked up in his father's or mother's face, would catch the serious and severe expression he saw there, and trot silently on, forgetting that he was fatigued.

For my part, I felt the spirit of the scene strongly, yet, perhaps, not with such an exclusive interest as others. I had not only awe, terror, enthusiasm, pride, and devotion to manage, but suffered heavy annoyance from the inroad of a villainous curiosity which should thrust itself among the statelier feelings of the occasion, and set all attempts to restrain it at defiance. It was a sad bar to my devotions, which, but for its intrusion, I might have conducted with more

meritorious steadiness. How, for instance, was it possible for me to register the transgressions of my whole life, heading them under the "seven deadly sins," with such a prospect before me as the beautiful waters and shores of Lough Erne?

Despite of all the solemnity about me, my unmanageable eye would turn from the very blackest of the seven deadly offences, and the stoutest of the four cardinal virtues, to the beetling, abrupt, and precipitous rocks which hung over the lake as if ready to tumble into its waters. I broke away, too, from several "acts of contrition"[1] to conjecture whether the dark, shadowy inequalities which terminated the horizon, and penetrated, methought, into the very skies far beyond the lake, were mountains or clouds—a dark problem which to this day I have not been able to solve. Nay, I was taken twice, despite of the most virtuous efforts to the contrary, from a *Salve Regina*,[2] to watch a little skiff, which shone with its snowy sail spread before the radiant evening sun, and glided over the waters like an angel sent on some happy message. In fact, I found my heart on the point of corruption by indulging in what I had set down in my vocabulary as the lust of the eye, and had some faint surmise that I was plunging into obduracy. I accordingly made a private mark with the nail of my thumb on the "act of contrition" in my prayer-book, and another on the *Salve Regina*, that I might remember to confess for these devilish wanderings. But what all my personal piety could not effect, a lucky turn in the road accomplished by bringing me from the view of the lake; and thus ended my temptations and my defeats on these points.

When we got into Petigo, we found the lodging-houses considerably crowded. I contrived, however, to establish myself as well as another, and in consequence of my black dress, and the garrulous industry of my epicene companion, who stuck close to me all along, was treated with more than common respect. And here I was deeply impressed with the remarkable contour of many visages, which I had

[1] It should be observed here that several of the pilgrims, as they approach the vicinity of the Lough, are in the habit of praying privately along the way.

[2] A Latin hymn to the Virgin.

now a better opportunity of examining than while on the road. There seemed every description of guilt, and every degree of religious feeling, mingled together in the same mass, and all more or less subdued by the same principle of abrupt and gloomy abstraction.

There was a little man, dressed in a turned black coat, and drab cassimere small-clothes, who struck me as a remarkable figure. His back was long, his legs and thighs short, and he walked on the edge of his feet. He had a pale, sorrowful face, with bags hung under his eyes, drooping eyelids, no beard, no brows, and no chin; for in the place of the two latter, there was a slight frown where the brows ought to have been, and a curve in the place of the chin, merely perceptible from the bottom of his under-lip to his throat. He wore his own hair, which was a light bay, so that you could scarcely distinguish it from a wig. I was given to understand that he was a religious tailor under three blessed orders.

There was another, a round-shouldered man, with black twinkling eyes, plump face, rosy cheeks, and nose twisted at the top. In his character, humour appeared to be the predominant principle. He was evidently an original, and, I am sure, had the knack of turning the ludicrous side of every object towards him. His eye would roll about from one person to another while fingering his beads, with an expression of humour something like delight beaming from his fixed, steady countenance; and when anything that would have been particularly worthy of a joke met his glance, I could perceive a tremulous twinkle of the eye intimating his inward enjoyment. I think still this jocular abstinence was to him the severest part of the pilgrimage. I asked him was he ever at the "Island" before; he peered into my face with a look that infected me with risibility, without knowing why, shrugged up his shoulders, looked into the fire, and said "No," with a dry emphatic cough after it, as much as so say, you may apply my answer to the future as well as to the past. Religion, I thought, was giving him up, or sent him here as a last resource. He spoke to nobody.

A little behind the humourist sat a very tall, thin, important-looking personage, dressed in a shabby black coat; there was a cast of severity and self-sufficiency in his face, which at

once indicated him to be a man of office and authority, little accustomed to have his own will disputed. I was not wrong in my conjecture; he was a classical schoolmaster, and was pompously occupied, when I first saw him, in reading through his spectacles, with his head raised aloft, the seven Penitential Psalms in Latin, out of the "Key of Paradise," to a circle of women and children, along with two or three men in frieze coats, who listened with profound attention.

A little to the right of Syntax were a man and woman —the man engaged in teaching the woman a Latin charm against the colic, to which it seems she was subject. Although they all, for the most part, who were in the large room about us prayed aloud, yet by fastening the attention on any particular person, you could hear what he said. I therefore heard the words of this charm, and as my memory is not bad, I still remember them; they ran thus:—

Petrus sedebat super lapidem marmoream juxta ædem Jerusalem et dolebat, Jesus veniebat et rogabat "Petre, quid doles?" "Doleo vento ventre." "Surge, Petre, et sanus esto." Et quicunque hæc verba non scripta sed memoriter tradita recitat nunquam dolebit vento ventre.

These are the words literally; but I need not say, that had the poor woman sat there since, she would not have got them impressed on her memory.

There were also other countenances in which a man might almost read the histories of their owners. Methought I could perceive the lurking, unsubdued spirit of the battered rake, in the leer of his roving eye, while he performed, in the teeth of his flesh, blood, and principles, the delusive vow to which the shrinking spirit, at the approach of death, on the bed of sickness, clung as to its salvation; for it was evident that superstition had only exacted from libertinism what fear and ignorance had promised her.

I could note the selfish, griping miser, betraying his own soul, and holding a false promise to his heart, as with lank jaw, keen eye, and brow knit with anxiety for the safety of his absent wealth, he joined some group, eager, if possible, to defraud them even of the benefit of their prayers, and attempting to practise that knavery upon heaven which had been so successful upon earth.

I could see the man of years, I thought, withering away under the disconsolation of an ill-spent life, old without peace, and grey without wisdom, flattering himself that he is religious because he prays, and making a merit of offering to God that which Satan had rejected; thinking, too, that he has withdrawn from sin, because the ability of committing it has left him, and taking credit for subduing his propensities, although they have only died in his nature.

I could mark, too, I fancied, the stiff set features of the pharisee, affecting to instruct others, that he might show his own superiority, and descanting on the merits of works, that his hearers might know he performed them himself.

I could also observe the sly, demure overdoings of the hypocrite, and mark the deceitful lines of grave meditation running along that part of his countenance where in others the front of honesty lies open and expanded. I could trace him when he got beyond his depth, where the want of sincerity in religion betrayed his ignorance of its forms.

I could note the scowling, sharp-visaged bigot, wrapt up in the nice observance of trifles, correcting others if the object of their supplications embraced anything within a whole hemisphere of heresy, and not so much happy because he thought himself in the way of salvation, as because he thought others out of it—a consideration which sent pleasure tingling to his fingers' ends.

But notwithstanding all this, I noticed, through the gloom of the place, many who were actuated by genuine, unaffected piety, from whom charity and kindness beamed forth through all the disadvantages around them. Such people, for the most part, prayed in silence and alone. Whenever I saw a man or woman anxious to turn away their faces, and separate themselves from the flocks of gregarious babblers, I seldom failed to witness the outpouring of a contrite spirit. I have certainly seen, in several instances, the tear of heartfelt repentance bedew the sinner's cheek. I observed one peculiarly interesting female who struck me very much. In personal beauty she was very lovely—her form perfectly symmetrical, and she evidently belonged to rather a better order of society. Her dress was plain, though her garments were by no means common. She could scarcely be twenty,

and yet her face told a tale of sorrow, of deep, wasting, desolating sorrow. As the prayers, hymns, and religious conversations which went on were peculiar to the place, time, and occasion—it being near the hour of rest—she probably did not feel that reluctance in going to pray in presence of so many which she otherwise would have felt. She kept her eye on a certain female who had a remote dusky corner to pray in, and the moment she retired from it, this young creature went up and there knelt down. Her prayer was short, and she had neither book nor beads; but the heavings of her bosom, and her suppressed sobs, sufficiently proclaimed her sincerity. Her petition, indeed, seemed to go to heaven from a broken heart. When it was finished, she remained a few moments on her knees, and dried her eyes with her handkerchief. As she rose up, I could mark the modest, timid glance, and the slight blush as she presented herself again amongst the company, where all were strangers. I thought she appeared, though in the midst of such a number, to be woefully and pitiably alone.

As for my own companion, she absolutely made the grand tour of all the praying knots on the premises, having taken a very tolerable bout with each. There were two qualities in which she shone pre-eminent—voice and distinctness; for she gave by far the loudest and most monotonous chant. Her visage also was remarkable, for her complexion resembled the dark, dingy red of a winter apple. She had a pair of very piercing black eyes, with which, while kneeling with her body thrown back upon her heels as if they were a cushion, she scrutinised, at her ease, every one in the room, rocking herself gently from side to side. The poor creature paid a marked attention to the interesting young woman I have just mentioned. At last they dropped off one by one to bed, that they might be up early the next morning for the Lough, with the exception of some half-dozen, more long-winded than the rest, whose voices I could hear at their sixth rosary, in the rapid elevated tone peculiar to Catholic devotion, until I fell asleep.

The next morning when I awoke, I joined with all haste the aggregate crowd that proceeded in masses towards the lake—or Purgatory—which lies amongst the hills that extend

to the north-east of Petigo. While ascending the bleak, hideous mountain-range, whose ridge commands a full view of this celebrated scene of superstition, the manner and appearance of the pilgrims were deeply interesting. Such groupings as pressed forward around me would have made fine studies either for him who wished to deplore or to ridicule the degradations and absurdities of human nature; indeed, there was an intense interest in the scene. I look back at this moment with awe towards the tremulous and high-strained vibrations of my mind as it responded to the excitement. Reader, have you ever approached the Eternal City? have you ever, from the dreary solitudes of the Campagna, seem the dome of St. Peter's for the first time? and have the monuments of the greatest men and the mightiest deeds that ever the earth witnessed—have the names of the Cæsars, and the Catos, and the Scipios excited a curiosity amounting to a sensation almost too intense to be borne? I think I can venture to measure the expansion of your mind as it enlarged itself before the crowding visions of the past, as the dim grandeur of ages rose up and developed itself from amidst the shadows of time; and entranced amidst the magic of your own associations, you desired to stop—you were almost content to go no farther—your own Rome you were in the midst of—Rome free—Rome triumphant—Rome classical. And perhaps it is well you awoke in good time from your shadowy dream, to escape from the unvaried desolation and the wasting malaria that brooded all around. Reader, I can fancy that such might have been your sensations when the domes and the spires of the world's capital first met your vision; and I can assure you, that while ascending the ridge that was to give me a view of Patrick's Purgatory, my sensations were as impressively, as powerfully excited. For I desire you to recollect that the welfare of your immortal soul was not connected with your imaginings; your magnificent visions did not penetrate into the soul's doom. You were not submitted to the agency of a transcendental power. You were, in a word, a poet, but not a fanatic. What comparison, then, could there be between the exercise of your free, manly, cultivated understanding, and my feelings on this occasion, with my thick-coming visions of immortality,

that almost lifted me from the mountain-path I was ascending, and brought me, as it were, into contact with the invisible world? I repeat it, then, that such were my feelings when all the faculties which exist in the mind were aroused and concentrated upon one object. In such a case the pilgrim stands, as it were, between life and death; and as it was Superstition that placed him there, she certainly conjures up to his heated fancy those dark, fleeting, and indistinct images which are best adapted to that gloom which she has already cast over his mind. Although there could not be less than two hundred people, young and old, boys and girls, men and women, the hale and the sickly, the blind and the lame, all climbing to gain the top with as little delay as possible, yet there was scarcely a sound, certainly not a word, to be heard among them. For my part, I plainly heard the palpitations of my heart, both loud and quick. Had I been told that the veil of eternity was about to be raised before me at that moment, I could scarcely have felt more intensely. Several females were obliged to rest for some time, in order to gain both physical and moral strength—one fainted; and several old men were obliged to sit down. All were praying, every crucifix was out, every bead in requisition, and nothing broke a silence so solemn but a low, monotonous murmur of deep devotion.

As soon as we ascended the hill, the whole scene was instantly before us: a large lake, surrounded by an amphitheatre of mountains, bleak, uncomfortable, and desolate. In the lake itself, about half a mile from the edge next us, was to be seen the "Island," with two or three slated houses on it, naked and unplastered, as desolate-looking almost as the mountains. A little range of exceeding low hovels, which a dwarf could scarcely enter without stooping, appeared to the left; and the eye could rest on nothing more, except a living mass of human beings crawling slowly about. The first thing the pilgrim does when he gets a sight of the lake is to prostrate himself, kiss the earth, and then on his knees offer up three *Paters* and *Aves* and a "Creed" for the favour of being permitted to see this blessed place. When this is over, he descends to the lake, and after paying tenpence to the ferryman, is rowed over to the Purgatory.

When the whole view was presented to me, I stood for

some time to contemplate it; and I cannot better illustrate the reaction which took place in my mind than by saying that it resembles that awkward inversion which a man's proper body experiences when, on going to pull something from which he expects a marvellous resistance, it comes with him at a touch, and the natural consequence is that he finds his head down and his heels up. That which dashed the whole scene from the dark elevation in which the romance of devotion had placed it was the appearance of slated houses, and of the smoke that curled from the hovels and the prior's residence. This at once brought me back to humanity; and the idea of roasting meat, boiling pots, and dressing dinners, dispossessed every fine and fearful image which had floated through my imagination for the last twelve hours. In fact, allowing for the difference of situation, it nearly resembled John's Well, or James's Fair, when beheld at a distance, turning the slated houses into inns, and the hovels into tents. A certain idea, slight, untraceable, and involuntary, went over my brain on that occasion, which, though it did not then cost me a single effort of reflection, I think was revived and developed at a future period of my life, and became, perhaps to a certain extent, the means of opening a wider range of thought to my mind, and of giving a new tone to my existence. Still, however, nothing except my idea of its external appearance disappointed me; I accordingly descended with the rest, and in a short time found myself among the living mass upon the island.

The first thing I did was to hand over my three cakes of oaten bread which I had got made in Petigo, tied up in a handkerchief, as well as my hat and second shirt, to the care of the owner of one of the huts; having first, by the way, undergone a second prostration on touching the island, and greeted it with fifteen holy kisses and another string of prayers. I then, according to the regulations, should commence the "stations," lacerated as my feet were after so long a journey; so that I had not a moment to rest. Think, therefore, what I must have suffered on surrounding a large chapel, in the direction of from east to west, over a pavement of stone spikes, every one of them making its way along my nerves and muscles to my unfortunate brain. I was absolutely stupid

and dizzy with the pain, the praying, the jostling, the elbowing, the scrambling, and the uncomfortable penitential murmurs of the whole crowd. I knew not what I was about, but went through the forms in the same mechanical spirit which pervaded all present. I verily think that if mortification of the body, without conversion of the life or heart—if penance and not repentance *could* save the soul, no wretch who performed a pilgrimage here could with a good grace be damned. Out of hell the place is matchless, and if there be a purgatory in the other world, it may very well be said there is a fair rehearsal of it in the county of Donegal in Ireland!

When I commenced my station, I started from what is called the "Beds," and God help St. Patrick if he lay upon them; they are sharp stones placed circularly in the earth, with the spike ends of them up, one circle within another; and the manner in which the pilgrim gets as far as the innermost resembles precisely that in which schoolboys enter the "walls of Troy" upon their slates. I moved away from these upon the sharp stones with which the whole island is surfaced, keeping the chapel, or "Prison," as it is called, upon my right; then turning, I came round again, with a *circumbendibus*, to the spot from which I set out. During this circuit, as well as I can remember, I repeated fifty-five *Paters* and *Aves*, and five creeds or five decades; and be it known, that the fifty prayers were offered up to the Virgin Mary, and the odd five to God. I then commenced getting round the external beds, during which I repeated, I think, fifteen *Paters* and *Aves* more; and as the beds decreased in circumference, the prayers decreased in length, until a short circuit and three *Paters* and *Aves* finished the last and innermost of these blessed couches. I really forget how many times each day the prison and these beds are to be surrounded, and how many hundred prayers are to be repeated during the circuit, though each circuit is, in fact, making the grand tour of the island; but I never shall forget that I was the best part of a July day at it, when the soles of my feet were flayed, and the stones hot enough to broil a beef-steak. When the first day's station was over, is it necessary to say that a little rest would have been agreeable? But no, this would not suit the policy of the place: here it may be truly said that there is no rest for the wicked.

The only luxury allowed me was the privilege of feasting upon one of my cakes (having not tasted food that blessed day until then)—upon one of my cakes, I say, and a copious supply of the water of the lake, which, to render the repast more agreeable, was made lukewarm. This was to keep my spirits up after the delicate day's labour I had gone through, and to cheer me against the pleasant prospect of a hard night's praying without sleep, which lay in the background. But when I saw every one at this refreshing meal with a good, thick, substantial bannock, and then looked at the immateriality of my own, I could not help reverting to the woman who made them for me with a degree of vivacity not altogether in unison with the charity of a Christian. The knavish creature defrauded me of one half of the oatmeal, although I had purchased it myself in Petigo for the occasion; being determined that as I was only to get two meals in the three days, they should be such as a person could fast upon. Never was there a man more bitterly disappointed; for they were not thicker than crown-pieces, and I searched for them in my mouth to no purpose—the only thing like substance I could feel there was the warm water. At last, night came; but here to describe the horrors of what I suffered I hold myself utterly inadequate. I was wedged in a shake-down bed with seven others, one of whom was a Scotch Papist—another a man with a shrunk leg, who wore a crutch—all afflicted with that disease which northern men that feed on oatmeal are liable to; and then the swarms that fell upon my skin, and probed, and stung, and fed on me! it was pressure and persecution almost insupportable, and yet such was my fatigue that sleep even here began to weigh down my eyelids.

I was just on the point of enjoying a little rest, when a man, ringing a large hand-bell, came round crying out in a low, supernatural growl, which could be heard double the distance of the loudest shout—"Waken up, waken up, and come to prison!" The words were no sooner out of his mouth than there was a sudden start and a general scramble in the dark for our respective garments. When we got dressed, we proceeded to the waters of the lake, in which we washed our face and hands, repeating prayers during the ablution. This to me was the most impressive and agreeable part of the

whole station. The night while we were in bed, or rather in torture, had become quite stormy, and the waves of the lake beat against the shore with the violence of an agitated sea. There was just sufficient moon to make the "darkness visible," and to show the black clouds drifting with rapid confusion, in broken masses, over our heads. This joined to the tossing of the billows against the shore—the dark silent groups that came like shadows, stooping for a moment over the surface of the waters, and retreating again in a manner which the severity of the night rendered necessarily quick, raising thereby in the mind the idea of gliding spirits—then the preconceived desolation of the surrounding scenery—the indistinct, shadowy chain of dreary mountains which, faintly relieved by the lurid sky, hemmed in the lake—the silence of the forms, contrasted with the tumult of the elements about us—the loneliness of the place—its isolation and remoteness from the habitations of men—all this put together, joined to the feeling of deep devotion in which I was wrapped, had really a sublime effect upon me. Upon the generality of those who were there, blind to the natural beauty and effect of the hour and the place, and viewing it only through the medium of superstitious awe, it was indeed calculated to produce the notion of something not belonging to the circumstances and reality of human life.

From this scene we passed to one which, though not characterised by its dark, awful beauty, was scarcely inferior to it in effect. It was called the "Prison," and it is necessary to observe here, that every pilgrim must pass twenty-four hours in this place, kneeling, without food or sleep, although one meal of bread and warm water, and whatever sleep he could get in Petigo with seven in a bed, were his allowance of food and sleep during the twenty-four hours previous. I must here beg the good reader's attention for a moment, with reference to our penance in the "Prison." Let us consider now the nature of this pilgrimage. It must be performed on foot, no matter what the distance of residence (allowing for voyages), the condition of life, the age or the sex of the pilgrim may be. Individuals from France, from America, England, and Scotland visit it, as voluntary devotees, or to perform an act of penance for some great crime, or perhaps

to atone for a bad life in general. It is performed, too, in the dead heat of summer, when labour is slack, and the lower orders have sufficient leisure to undertake it, and, I may add, when travelling on foot is most fatiguing; they arrive, therefore, without a single exception, blown and jaded almost to death. The first thing they do, notwithstanding this, is to commence the fresh rigours of the station, which occupies them several hours. This consists in what I have already described, viz., the pleasant promenade upon the stony spikes around the prison and the beds; that over, they take their first and only meal for the day; after which, as in my own case just related, they must huddle themselves in clusters on what is barefacedly called a bed, but which is nothing more nor less than a beggarman's shake-down, where the smell, the heat, the filth, and, above all, the vermin, are intolerable to the very furthest stretch of the superlative degree. As soon as their eyes begin to close here, they are roused by the bellman, and summoned at the hour of twelve—first washing themselves, as aforesaid, in the lake, and then adjourning to the prison, which I am about to describe.

After having washed ourselves in the dark waters of the lake, we entered this famous "Prison," which is only a naked, unplastered chapel, with an altar against one of the side-walls, and two galleries. On entering this place, a scene presented itself altogether unparalleled on the earth, and in every point of view capable to sustain the feelings raised in the mind by the midnight scenery of the lake as seen during the ablutions. The prison was full, but not crowded; for had it been crowded, we would have been happy. It was, however, just sufficiently filled to give every individual the pleasure of sustaining himself, without having it in his power to recline for a moment in an attitude of rest, or to change that most insupportable of all bodily suffering, uniformity of position. There we knelt upon a hard ground floor, and commenced praying—and again I must advert to the policy which prevails in this island. During the period of imprisonment, there are no prescribed prayers nor ceremonies whatever to be performed; and this is the more strange, as every other stage of the station has its proper devotions. But these are suspended here, lest the attention of the prisoners might be fixed on any particular object, and the

supernatural character of drowsiness imputed to the place be thus doubted; they are therefore turned in without anything to excite them to attention, or to resist the propensity to sleep occasioned by their fatigue and want of rest. Having thus nothing to do, nothing to sustain, nothing to stimulate them, it is very natural that they should, even if unexhausted by previous lassitude, be inclined to sleep; but everything that can weigh them down is laid upon them in this heavy and oppressive superstition, that the strong delusion may be kept up.

On entering the prison, I was struck with the dim religious twilight of the place. Two candles gleamed faintly from the altar, and there was something, I thought, of a deadly light about them as they burned feebly and stilly against the darkness which hung over the other part of the building. Two priests, facing the congregation, stood upon the altar, in silence, with pale, spectral visages, their eyes catching an unearthly glare from the sepulchral light of the slender tapers. But that which was strangest of all, and, as I said before, without a parallel in this world, was the impression and effect produced by the deep, drowsy, hollow, hoarse, guttural, ceaseless, and monotonous hum which proceeded from about four hundred individuals half asleep and at prayer; for their cadences were blended and slurred into each other as they repeated, in an awe-struck and earnest undertone, the prayers in which they were engaged. It was certainly the strangest sound I ever heard, and resembled a thousand subterraneous groans, uttered in a kind of low, deep, unvaried chant. Nothing could produce a sense of gloomy alarm in a weak superstitious mind equal to this; and it derived much of its wild and singular character, as well as of its lethargic influence, from its continuity; for it still—still rung lowly and supernaturally on my ear. Perhaps the deep, wavy prolongation of the bass of a large cathedral bell, or that low, continuous sound which is distinct from its higher and louder intonations, would give a faint notion of it—yet only a faint one; for the body of hoarse monotony here was immense. Indeed, such a noise has something so powerfully lulling, that human nature, even excited by the terrible suggestions of superstitious fear, was scarcely able to withstand it.

Now, the poor pilgrims forget that this strong disposition

to sleep arises from the weariness produced by their long journeys—by the exhausting penance of the station, performed without giving them time to rest—by the other still more natural consequence of not giving them time to sleep—by the drowsy darkness of the chapel—and by the heaviness caught from the low, peculiar murmur of the pilgrims, which would of itself overcome the lightest spirit. I was here but a very short time when I began to doze, and just as my chin was sinking placidly on my breast, and the words of an *Ave Maria* dying upon my lips, I felt the charm all at once broken by a well-meant rap upon the occiput, conferred through the instrumentality of a little angry-looking squat urchin of sixty years, and a remarkably good blackthorn cudgel, with which he was engaged in thwacking the heads of such sinners as, not having the dread of insanity and the regulations of the place before their eyes, were inclined to sleep. I declare the knock I received told to such purpose on my head that nothing occurred during the pilgrimage that vexed me so much.

After all, I really slept the better half of the night; yet so indescribably powerful was the apprehension of derangement, that my hypocritical tongue wagged aloud at the prayers during these furtive naps. Nay, I not only slept but dreamed. I experienced also that singular state of being in which, while the senses are accessible to the influence of surrounding objects, the process of thought is suspended, the man seems to enjoy an inverted existence, in which the soul sleeps, and the body remains awake, and susceptible of external impressions. I once thought I was washing myself in the lake, and that the dashing noise of its waters rang in my ears; I also fancied myself at home in conversation with my friends; yet in neither case did I altogether forget where I was. Still, in struggling to bring my mind back, so paramount was the dread of awaking deranged, should I fall asleep, that these occasional visions—associating themselves with this terror—and this again broken in upon by the hoarse murmurs about me, throwing their dark shade on every object that passed my imagination, the force of reason being too vague at the moment—these occasional visions, I say, and this jumbling together of broken images and disjointed thoughts, had such an effect upon me, that I imagined several times that the

awful penalty was exacted, and that my reason was gone for ever. I frequently started, and on seeing two dim lights upon the altar, and on hearing the ceaseless and eternal murmurs going on—going on—around me, without being immediately able to ascribe them to their proper cause, I set myself down as a lost man ; for on that terror I was provokingly clear during the whole night. I more than once gave an involuntary groan or shriek on finding myself in this singular state ; so did many others ; and these groans and shrieks were wildly and fearfully contrasted with the never-ending hum which, like the ceaseless noise of a distant waterfall, went on during the night. The perspiration occasioned by this inconceivable distress, by the heat of the place, and by the unchangeableness of my position, flowed profusely from every pore.

In this prison, during the night, several persons go about with rods and staves, rapping those on the head whom they see heavy ; snuff-boxes also go round very freely, elbows are jogged, chins chucked, and ears twitched, for the purpose of keeping each other awake. The rods and staves are frequently changed from hand to hand, and I thought it would be a lucky job if I could get one for a little, to enable me to change my position. I accordingly asked a man who had been a long time banging in this manner, if he would allow me to take his place for some time, and he was civil enough to do so. I therefore set out on my travels through the prison, rapping about me at a great rate, and with remarkable effect ; for, whatever was the cause of it, I perceived that not a soul seemed the least inclined to doze after a visit from me : on the contrary, I observed several to scratch their heads, giving me at the same time significant looks of very sincere thankfulness.

But what I am convinced was the most meritorious act of my whole pilgrimage, as it was certainly the most zealously performed, was a remembrance I gave the squat fellow who visited me in the early part of the night. He was engaged, tooth and nail, with another man, at a *De profundis*, and although not asleep at the time, yet on the principle that prevention is better than cure, I thought it more prudent to let him have his rap before the occasion for it might come on ; he accordingly got full payment, at compound interest, for the villainous knock he had lent me before.

This employment stirred my blood a little, and I got much lighter. I could now pay some attention to the scene about me, and the first object that engaged it was a fellow with a hare-lip who had completely taken the lead at prayer. The organs of speech seemed to have been transferred from his mouth to his nose, and although Irish was his vernacular language, either some fool or knave had taught him to say his prayers in English; and you may take this as an observation founded on fact, that the language which a Roman Catholic of the lower class does not understand, is the one in which he is disposed to pray. As for him, he had lots of English prayers, though he was totally ignorant of that language. The twang from the nose, the loud and rapid tone in which he spoke, and the malaproprian happiness with which he travestied every prayer he uttered, would have compelled any man to smile. The priests laughed outright before the whole congregation—particularly one of them, whom I well knew; the other turned his face towards the altar, and gave full vent to his risibility. Now, it is remarkable that no one present attached the slightest impropriety to this—I for one did not; although it certainly occurred to me with full force at a subsequent period.

When morning came, the blessed light of the sun broke the leaden charm of the prison, and infused into us a wonderful portion of fresh vigour. This day being the second from our arrival, we had our second station to perform, and consequently all the sharp spikes to retraverse. We were not permitted at all to taste food during these twenty-four hours, so that our weakness was really very great. I beg leave, however, to return my special acknowledgments for the truly hospitable allowance of "wine" with which I, in common with every other pilgrim, was treated. This "wine" is made by filling a large pot with the lake water, and making it lukewarm. It is then handed round in jugs and wooden noggins —to their credit be it recorded, in the greatest possible abundance. On this alone I breakfasted, dined, and supped during the second or prison day of my pilgrimage.

At twelve o'clock that night we left prison, and made room for another squadron, who gave us their kennels. Such a luxury was sleep to me, however, that I felt not the

slightest inconvenience from the vermin; though I certainly made a point to avoid the Scotchman and the cripple. On the following day I confessed; and never was an unfortunate soul so grievously afflicted with a bad memory as I was on that occasion—the whole thing altogether, but particularly the prison scene, had knocked me up, I could not therefore remember a tithe of my sins; and the priest, poor man, had really so much to do, and was in such a hurry, that he had me clean absolved before I had got half through the preface, or knew what I was about. I then went with a fresh batch to receive the sacrament, which I did from the hands of the good-natured gentleman who enjoyed so richly the praying talents of the hare-lipped devotee in the prison.

I cannot avoid mentioning here a practice peculiar to Roman Catholics, which consists in an exchange of one or more prayers by a stipulation between two persons: I offer up a *Pater* and *Ave* for you, and you again for me. It is called swapping or exchanging prayers. After I had received the sacrament, I observed a thin, sallow little man, with a pair of beads as long as himself, moving from knot to knot, but never remaining long in the same place. At last he glided up to me, and in a whisper asked me if I knew him. I answered in the negative. "Oh, then, *alanna*, ye war never here before?" "Never." "Oh, I see that, *acushla;* you would a known me if you had. Well, then, did ye never hear of Sol Donnel, the pilgrim?" "I never did," I replied; "but are we not all pilgrims while here?" "To be sure, *aroon;* but I'm a pilgrim every place else, you see, as well as here, my darlin' sweet young man." "Then you're a pilgrim by profession?" "That's it, *asthore machree.* Everybody that comes here the second time, sure, knows Sol Donnel, the blessed pilgrim." "In that case it was impossible for me to know you, as I was never here before." "*Acushla*, I know that; but a good beginnin' are ye makin' of it—an' at your time of life too. But, *avick*, it must prosper wid ye—comin' here I mane." "I hope it may." "Well, yer parents isn't both livin', it's likely?" "No." "Aye! but ye'll jist not forget that same, ye see. I blieve I sed so—your father dead, I suppose?" "No; my mother." "Your mother—well, *avick*, I didn't say that for a sartinty; but

still, you see, *avourneen*, maybe somebody could a tould ye it was the mother, forhaps, afther all." "Did you know them?" I asked. "You see, *alanna*, I can't say that without first hearin' their names." "My name is B——." "An' a dacent, bearable name it is, darlin'. Is yer father of them dacent people the B——s of Newtownlimavady, *ahagur?*" "Not that I know of." "Oh, well, well, it makes no maxim between you an' me, at all, at all; but the Lord mark you to grace, anyhow; it's a dacent name, sure enough; only, if yer mother was livin', it's herself ud be the proud woman, an' well she might, to see sich a clane, promisin' son steppin' home to her from Lough Derg." "Indeed, I'm obliged to you," said I—"I protest I'm obliged to you for your good opinion of me." "It's nothin' but what ye desarve, *avick!* an' more nor that—yer the makins of a clargy, I'm guessin'?" "I am," said I, "surely designed for that." "Oh, I knew it, I knew it, it's in your face—you've the *sogarth* in yer very face; an' well will ye become the robes when ye get them on ye. Sure, an' to tell you the truth (in a whisper, stretching up his mouth to my ear), I feel my heart warm towardst you somehow." "I declare I feel much the same towards you," I returned; for the fellow, in spite of me, was gaining upon my good opinion—"you are a decent, civil soul." "An' for that raison, and for your dacent mother's sake (*sobies-coat in passy, amin*),[1] I'll jist here offer up the *grey profungus*[2] for the release of her sowl out o' the burnin' flames of purgathur." I really could not help shuddering at this. He then repeated a psalm for that purpose, the 130th in our Bible, but the 129th in theirs. When it was finished, with all due gesticulation, that is to say, having thumped his breast with great violence, kissed the ground, and crossed himself repeatedly, he says to me, like a man confident that he had paved his way to my good graces, "Now, *avick*, as we did do so much, you're the very darlin' young man that I won't lave, widout the best, maybe, that's to come yet, ye see; bekase I'll swap a prayer wid you this blessed minute." "I'm very glad you mentioned it," said I. "But you don't know, maybe, darlin', that I'm undher five

[1] *Requiescat in pace.* [2] *De profundis.*

ordhers." "Dear me! is it possible you're under so many?" "Undher five ordhers, *acushla!*" "Well," I replied, "I am ready." "Undher five ordhers—but I'll lave it to yourself; only, when it's over, maybe ye'll hear somethin' from me that'll make you thankful you ever give me silver, anyway."

By this time I saw his drift; but he really had managed his point so dexterously—not forgetting the *De profundis*—that I gave him tenpence in silver. He pocketed it with great alacrity, and was at the prayer in a twinkling, which he did offer up in prime style—five *Paters*, five *Aves*, and a creed; whilst I set the same number to his credit. When we had finished, he made me kneel down to receive his blessing, which he gave in great form. "Now," said he, in a low, important tone, "I'm goin' to show you a thing that'll make you bless the born day you ever seen my face, and it's this—did ye ever hear of the blessed Thirty Days' Prayer?"[1] "I can't say I did." "Well, *avick*, in good time still; but there's a blessed book, if ye can get it, that has a prayer in it named the Thirty Days' Prayer, an' if ye jist repate that same, every day for thirty days' fastin', there's no request ye'll ax from Heaven, good, bad, or indifferent, but ye'll get. And now do you begrudge givin' me what I got?" "Not a bit," said I; "and I'll certainly look for the book." "No, no, the darlin' fine young man," soliloquising aloud—"well and well did I know you wouldn't, nor another along wid it—sensible and learned as ye are, to know the blessed worth of what ye got for it; not makin', at the same time, any comparishment at all, at all, atween it and the dirty thrash of riches of this earth, that every one has their heart fixed upon—exceptin' them that the Lord gives the larnin' an' the edication to, to know betther."

Oh, flattery! flattery! and a touch of hypocrisy on my part! Between ye, did ye make another lodgment on my purse, which was instantly lightened by an additional bank token, value tenpence, handed over to this sugar-tongued old knave. When he pocketed this, he shook me cordially by the hand, bidding me "not to forgit the Thirty Days' Prayer, at any rate." He then glided off, with his small sallow face

[1] There is such a prayer, and I have often seen it in Catholic prayer-books.

stuck between his little shrugged shoulders, fingering his beads, and praying audibly with great apparent fervour, whilst his little keen eye was reconnoitring for another pigeon. In the course of a few minutes I saw him lead a large, soft, warm-looking countryman over to a remote corner, and enter into an earnest conversation with him, which, I could perceive, ended by their both kneeling down, I suppose, to swap a prayer; and I have no doubt but he lightened the honest countryman's purse as well as mine.

On the third day I was determined, if possible, to leave it early; so I performed my third and last station round the chapel and the beds, reduced to such a state of weakness and hunger that the coats of my stomach must have been rubbing against each other. My feet were quite shapeless; I therefore made the shortest circuit and the longest strides possible, until I finished it.

I was now ready to depart; and on my way to the boat, found my two old female companions watching, lest I should pass, and they might miss my company on the way. It was now past three o'clock, and we determined to travel as far as we could that night, as the accommodations were vile in Petigo; and the spokeswoman mentioned a house of entertainment, about twelve miles forward, where, she said, we would find better treatment. When we got on *terra firma*, the first man I saw was the monosyllabic humourist, sitting on a hillock resting himself—his eyes fixed on the earth, and he evidently in a brown study on what he had gone through. He was drawing in his breath gradually, his cheeks expanding all the while, until they reached the utmost point of distension, when he would all at once let it go with a kind of easy puff, ending in a groan, as he surveyed his naked feet, which were now quite square, and, like my own, out of all shape. I asked him how he liked the station. He gave me one of the old looks, shrugged his shoulders, but said nothing —it was, however, a shrug condemnatory. I then asked him would he ever make another pilgrimage? He answered me by another shrug, a grave look, drily raising his eyebrows, and a second appeal to his feet—all of which I easily translated into strong negatives. We refreshed ourselves in Petigo.

When we had finished our journey for the day, I was glad

to find a tolerable bed; and never did man enjoy such a luxury of sweet sleep as I did that night. My old companion, too, evinced an attention to me seldom experienced in an accidental traveller. She made them get down water and bathe my feet, and asked me at what hour I would set out in the morning, telling me that she would see my clothes brushed, and everything done herself—so minute was the honest creature in her little attentions. I told her I would certainly take a nap in the morning, as I had slept so little for the last three nights, and was, besides, so fatigued. "*Musha*, to be sure, and why not, *agra!* afther the hard bout you had in that blessed island—betoken that you're tinder and too soft-rared to bear it like them that the work hardens. Sleep!—to be sure you'll sleep your fill—you want it, in coorse; and now go to bed, and you'll appear quite another man in the mornin', plase God!"

I did not awake the next morning till ten o'clock, when I found the sun shining full into the room. I accordingly dressed myself partially—and I say partially, for I was rather surprised to find an unexpected chasm in my wardrobe: neither my hat, coat, nor waistcoat being forthcoming. But I immediately made myself easy by supposing that my kind companion had brought[1] them to be brushed. Yet I relapsed into something more than surprise when I saw my fellow-traveller's redoubtable jacket lying on the seat of a chair, and her hair-skin cap on the top of it. My misgivings now were anything but weak; nor was I at all improved, either in my religion or philosophy, when, on calling up the landlady, I heard that my two companions had set out that morning at four o'clock. I then inquired about my clothes, but all to no purpose. The poor landlady knew nothing about them—which, in fact, was the case; but she told me that the old one brushed them before she went away, saying that they were ready for me to put on when ever I wanted them. "Well," said I, "she has made another man of me." The landlady desired me to try if I had my purse; and I found that the kind creature had certainly spared my purse, but showed no mercy at all to what it contained, which was one

[1] "Brought" is frequently used in this peculiar way by Irish people.—ED.

pound in paper, and a few shillings in silver; the latter, however, she left me. I had now no alternative but to don the jacket and the hair-skin cap, which when I had done, with as bad a grace and as mortified a visage as ever man dressed himself with, I found I had not the slightest encouragement to throw my eye over the uniform gravity of my appearance, as I used to do in the black; for, alas! that which I was proudest of, viz., the clerical cut which it bestowed upon me, was fairly gone —I had now more the appearance of a poacher than a priest.

In this trim did I return to my friends—a goose stripped of my feathers—a dupe beknaved and beplundered—having been almost starved to death in the "Island," and nearly cudgelled by one of the priests. As soon as I crossed the threshold at home, the whole family were on their knees to receive my blessing, there being a peculiar virtue in the Lough Derg blessing. The next thing I did, after giving them an account of the manner in which I was plundered and stripped, was to make a due distribution of the pebbles of the lake, to contain which my sisters had, previous to my journey, wrought me a little silk bag. This I brought home, stuffed as full as my purse was empty; for the epicene old villain left it to me in all its plenitude—disdaining to touch it. When I went to mass the following Sunday I was surrounded by crowds, among whom I distributed my blessing, with an air of seriousness not at all lessened by the loss of my clothes and the emptying of my purse. On telling that part of my story to the priest, he laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. He was a pleasant little man, who was seldom known to laugh at anybody's joke but his own. Now, the said merriment of the reverend father I felt as contributing to make me look exceedingly ridiculous and sheepish. "So," says he, "you have fallen foul of Nell M'Collum, the most notorious *shuler* in the province! a gipsy, a fortune-teller, and a tinker's widow; but rest contented, you are not the first she has gulled—but beware the next time." "There is no danger of that," said I, with peculiar emphasis.

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